

# NEWS TODAY

## Fifth India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue concludes successfully in Delhi

- In 2+2 dialogue, **foreign and defence ministers** participated and discussed **strategic and security issues**.
- ⊖ India also has 2+2 dialogue mechanism with Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom and Russia.

### ➤ Key Highlights:

- ⊖ **Defence:** Both to **co-produce infantry combat vehicles** as part of **Defense Industrial Cooperation**.
  - ◆ Both looked forward to finalizing **Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA)**.
  - ◆ It will further integrate the **defense industrial ecosystems** of both countries while **strengthening supply chain resilience**.
- ⊖ **Science and Technology Partnerships:** Reviewed **U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)**.
  - ◆ iCET aims to strengthen and broaden the strategic technological partnership between the companies, and academic institutions.
- ⊖ **Trade:** Welcomed the **progress of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)**.
  - ◆ IPEF has four pillars relating to Trade (I); Supply Chains (II); Clean Economy (III); and Fair Economy (IV). India has joined three pillars of the IPEF, but stayed out of the trade pillar.
- ⊖ **Multilateral Diplomacy and Connectivity:** Both reaffirmed the importance of a **free, open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific** and reiterated benefits of **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor**.
- ⊖ **Other:** Improve Cooperation under the **USA's Cancer Moonshot program**.

### Key Aspects of India-US relations:

- US is India's largest export destination.
- It is 3rd largest defence supplier to India. Also, it has recognized India as a key **defence partner** and signed defence cooperation treaties like **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)** in 2020.
- Recently, India has joined **US-led Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)**, which aims to ensure the supply of critical minerals.



## Towards Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040 report released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

- The Report was released at the **Third Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution (INC-3)**.
- It provided a roadmap for governments and policymakers to **tackle the full lifecycle of plastic** by curbing production and demand, increasing circularity, etc.
- **The key findings of the report**
  - ⊖ **Business as usual is unsustainable.** Under the Baseline scenario (reflecting climate policies in place as of 2021), would lead to a 50% increase in leakage of (macro)plastics to the environment by 2040.
  - ⊖ Early, stringent, and coordinated policy action globally could cut plastic waste generation in 2040 by a quarter below the baseline.
    - ◆ Such policy action would **cost 0.5% of global GDP**.

### ➤ Recommendations to eliminate plastic pollution

- ⊖ **Curb production and demand:** restrain production and demand towards sustainable levels by **targeted taxes** and **regulation** on avoidable plastics.
- ⊖ **Design for circularity:** make the plastic production process more **circular** by **ecodesign criteria** and product standards for reuse.
- ⊖ **Enhance recycling:** close material loops by improving **separate collection, sorting, and recycling** of plastic waste and steps like extended producer responsibility.
- ⊖ **Close leakage pathways:** decrease losses into the environment, including via effective waste collection and disposal.

### Indian government's steps to curb plastic pollution

- ⊖ **Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2022** mandated Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).
- ⊖ India banned identified items of **single-use plastic**.
- ⊖ **Swachh Bharat Mission** creates awareness on curbing the use of single-use plastic and effective management of plastic waste.

## Ministry of Information and Broadcasting approves the Digital Advertisement Policy 2023

- It will enable the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC) to leverage the digital media space to create awareness about government schemes and policies.
- **Objectives of policy**
  - ⊕ To improve the social media outreach of various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India.
  - ⊕ To implement a policy framework that enables Ministries and CBC to engage with Social Media Platforms.
- **Key features of the policy**
  - ⊕ Enable CBC to empanel agencies and organizations in the OTT and Video on Demand Space.
  - ⊕ The empanelment of Digital Audio platforms to leverage the growing number of listeners to Podcasts and Digital Audio.
  - ⊕ Introduces competitive bidding for rate discovery, ensuring transparency and efficiency.
  - ⊕ Empower CBC to onboard New and Innovative Communication Platforms in the Digital Space.
- **Benefits of policy**
  - ⊕ Effective delivery of citizen-centric messages in a targeted manner,
  - ⊕ Cost efficiencies in public-oriented campaigns.
  - ⊕ Leverage a huge subscriber base (internet penetration in India as of March 2023, is over 880 million and over 1172 million telecom subscribers)
  - ⊕ Technology-enabled messaging options
  - ⊕ Can channelize public service campaign messages through Mobile Applications.

### Central Bureau of Communication



- About:** It acts as an advisory body to the Government on media strategy.
- Genesis:** Set up in 2017 by integration of the erstwhile Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP), Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP), and Song & Drama Division (S&DD).
- Mandate:** To advance the Government's image as the prime facilitator of people's empowerment by positioning messages through Print Media, Audio-Visual, Outdoor, and Digital Media.
- Ministry:** Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

## The government issues FY24's first Sovereign Green Bond (SGRBs)

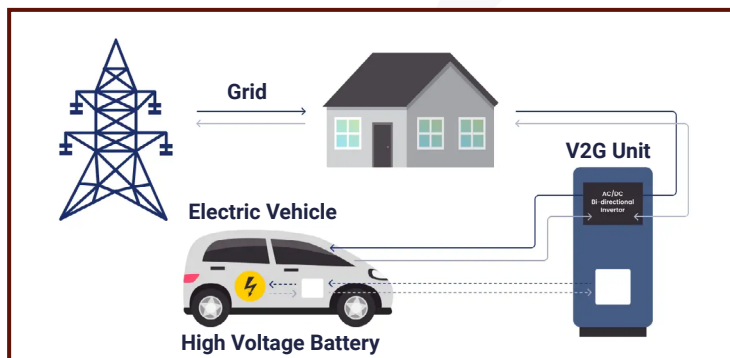
- Green bonds are debt instruments that support expenditures and projects with environmental benefits.
- The Union Budget 2022-23 made an announcement to issue Sovereign Green Bonds.
- Later, the Finance Ministry approved India's final Sovereign Green Bonds framework. The core components of the Framework are
  - ⊕ **Use of Proceeds:** It outlines 9 eligible categories like clean transportation of projects to finance using SGRB proceeds.
  - ⊕ **Process for project evaluation and selection:** established a two-tier governance process.
    - ◆ The initial selection of projects is the responsibility of the ministry or department in charge of implementing the project or program.
    - ◆ The Green Finance Working Committee oversees and validates decisions by the ministries or departments
  - ⊕ **Management:** proceeds are deposited into the Consolidated Fund of India and managed by the Ministry of Finance's Public Debt Management Cell.
  - ⊕ **Audit:** by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).
- **Benefits**
  - ⊕ They carry nil credit and default risks.
  - ⊕ They do not bear project-related risks and support government financing.
- **Challenges**
  - ⊕ Greenwashing (environmental claims without evidence) in the funded projects.
  - ⊕ Lower liquidity and widening pricing differentials in the bond market as select large investors hold green bonds until maturity (due to their investment mandate).

## Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Proposed Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023

- It will replace the Cable TV Networks (Regulations) Act, 1995 and other policy guidelines that govern Information and broadcasting sector.
- **Key provisions:**
  - ⊕ **Consolidated Legal Framework:** Will cover the Over-the-Top (OTT), Direct-to-Home (DTH), Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), digital news and current affairs etc.
  - ⊕ **Introduction of Content evaluation committees:** To enhance self-regulation.
  - ⊕ **Programme and Advertisement Code:** It allows for a differentiated approach and it requires self-classification by broadcasters and access control measures for restricted content.
  - ⊕ **Broadcast Advisory Council:** Will replace the existing Inter Departmental Committee.
  - ⊕ **Equitable Penalties:** Monetary penalties and fines will be linked to the financial capacity of the entity.
  - ⊕ **Accessibility measures for persons with disabilities:** By enabling provisions for the issue of comprehensive accessibility guidelines.
  - ⊕ **Infrastructure Sharing, Platform Services:** Bill provides infrastructure sharing among broadcasting network operators and carriage of platform services.
- **Need of the bill: Adopt unified and future-focused approach,** bill will improve broadcasting sector's regulatory framework by replacing out-dated Acts, Rules, and Guidelines.
  - ⊕ Also, it will promote Inclusion of Divyangjan community, etc.
  - ⊕ It will enhance ease of doing business as one stop legislation.

## Central Electricity Authority (CEA) proposed battery standardization to boost EV-to-grid charging

- The report provides a brief overview of the services that Electric Vehicles (EV's) can provide to the power system through **smart charging**.
  - ◆ The main form of smart charging include bidirectional (sometimes referred to as reverse charging) vehicle-to-grid (V2G).
- **Benefits of V2G:**
  - ⊕ **Flexibility in the Power System Operations:** Each EV could effectively become a microgrid-connected storage unit with the potential to provide a broad range of services to the system.
  - ⊕ **Better integration of renewable energy through peak shaving:** It involves flattening the peak demand and filling the valley of demand by incentivizing late morning/ afternoon charging in systems with large penetration of solar.
  - ⊕ **Other: Optimized Grid Infrastructure Requirements, etc.**
- **Recommendations:**
  - ⊕ **Centralised monitoring system** for providing synergies between grid and mobility.
  - ⊕ **Complement** grid charging with storage at charging points.
  - ⊕ Facilitate **advanced metering infrastructure** establishments.
  - ⊕ Need to be supported by policy measures such as the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme, etc.
- **CEA** is established under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948. It discharges functions under Electricity Act, 2003, which replaced 1948 Act.



### Also in News



#### Supreme Court's judgement on Governors

- SC in a writ petition observed that Governors can't sit on Bills passed by Assembly.
- **Other Key Observation:**
  - ⊕ It is not **constitutionally valid** for the Governor to **question how the Speaker exercised his jurisdiction** on adjournments of the House.
  - ⊕ The governor could **either assent to the Bills, withhold assent, and send them back with a "message"** to reconsider them or refer them to the President.
  - ⊕ The governor is intended to be a **constitutional statesman** guiding the government on matters of constitutional concern.

**Note:** For more on governors' role in assenting bills refer to News Today dated 3rd November, 2023.



#### Lake Titicaca

- Experts have found that Lake Titicaca is shrinking due to climate change.
- **About Lake Titicaca:**
  - ⊕ **Location:** It is situated between **Peru** (to the west) and **Bolivia** (to the east).
    - ◆ It lies between **Andean ranges (longest mountain range)** in a vast basin that comprises most of the Altiplano (high Plateau).
  - ⊕ It is the **largest freshwater lake** in **South America**.
  - ⊕ It is the highest (**amongst the world's large lakes**) navigable body of water in the world.



#### UN resolution condemning Israeli settlements

- India supports **UN resolution condemning Israeli settlements** in Palestine
- UN draft resolution, titled "Israeli Settlements in **Occupied Palestinian Territory**", including East Jerusalem, and Occupied Syrian Golan", was passed with a majority.
  - ⊕ It was **favoured by 145 countries** (including China, France, Japan, and Russia), and opposed by seven (including US, Canada).
- The resolution "**Reaffirms that the Israeli settlements in the "Occupied Palestinian Territory", are illegal and an obstacle to peace and economic and social development**
- Earlier, India had abstained from a **resolution that called for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce** leading to a cessation of hostilities.



#### BONGOSAGAR-23

- It is a Bilateral Exercise naval exercise between India and Bangladesh.





### Insurance Surety bonds

- NHAI accepted the **first insurance surety bond** as bid security.
- **About Insurance Surety bonds**
  - ⊖ It is a **three-party contract** by which **one party (the surety) guarantees** the performance or obligations of a **second party (the principal)** to a **third party (the obligee)**.
  - ⊖ It acts as a **security arrangement for infrastructure projects** and insulates the contractor as well as the principal.
  - ⊖ Insurance Surety Bonds (ISB), allowed by **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI)** in April 2022, has been brought as a replacement of bank guarantees.



### Attenborough echidna (*Zaglossus attenboroughi*)

- Elusive Attenborough echidna **rediscovered in Indonesia**.
- Named after famed British naturalist **David Attenborough**, it was last seen in **1961**
- **IUCN status:** Critically Endangered
- About Echidnas:
  - ⊖ There are **four echidna species**.
    - ◆ **Three have long beaks**, with the **Attenborough echidna**, and the **western echidna** considered **critically endangered**.
  - ⊖ **Echidnas are nocturnal and shy**; they are **members of the monotremes -- an egg-laying mammal** (the only other member is the **duck-billed platypus**)
  - ⊖ They **eat through toothless beaks**.
  - ⊖ Found in **Australia, Tasmania, and New Guinea**.



### Ben Gurion Canal Project

- This project plans to join the **Red Sea with the Mediterranean providing an alternative to the Suez Canal**.
- It envisages **cutting a canal through the Israeli-controlled Negev Desert** from the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba to the Eastern Mediterranean coast.
  - ⊖ It was first **envisioned in the 1960s**.
- **If completed**, it would **transform global maritime dynamics** by taking away **Egypt's monopoly over the shortest route between Europe and Asia**.
- **Challenges:** extremely complex and expensive; limitations due to terrain and topography.



### Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP)

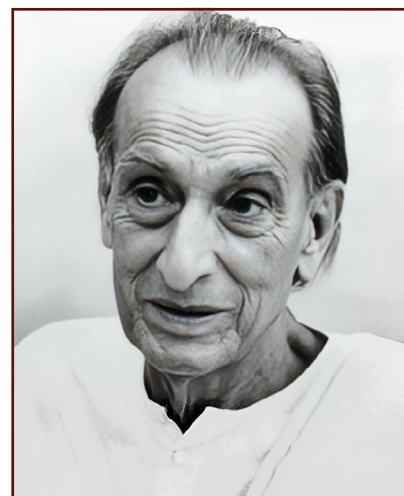
- Overall increase of **60% in Tiger Population** was highlighted by a report submitted under **GTRP 2.0**.
- **About Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP)**
  - ⊖ It was an effort of **13 countries** to **double tiger numbers** in the wild by **2022**.
  - ⊖ It evolved under the **Global Tiger Initiative** in 2010 via the **St Petersburg Declaration**.
  - ⊖ In 2022, **GTRP 2.0** was **launched (till 2034)**.
    - ◆ It emphasizes on strengthening tiger **governance**, enhancing **resources and protection**, while addressing **contemporary challenges** like Human-Wildlife Conflict.

## Personality in News



### Jiwatram Bhagwandas (J.B.) Kripalani (1888- 1982)

- He was freedom fighter, academician and socialist.
- **Contributions**
  - ⊖ **Freedom movement:** Accompanied Mahatma Gandhiji in his campaign in Champaran movement. Took part in all movements of Congress since 1921.
    - ◆ Elected as President of Congress in 1946 and led it through days of power transfer.
    - ◆ He was the founder of the **Praja Socialist Party (PSP)**.
  - ⊖ **Role in Constitution Making:** Member of constituent assembly and entrusted with chairmanship of **Fundamental Rights subcommittee**.
  - ⊖ He earned the name '**Acharya**' while teaching at Gujarat Vidyapith.
  - ⊖ **Ethical values:** Integrity, selflessness, courage, commitment to social justice.



**Jiwatram Bhagwandas (J.B.) Kripalani (1888- 1982)**