

NEWS TODAY

GLOBAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX (MPI) 2023 UNVEILED BY UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (UNDP)

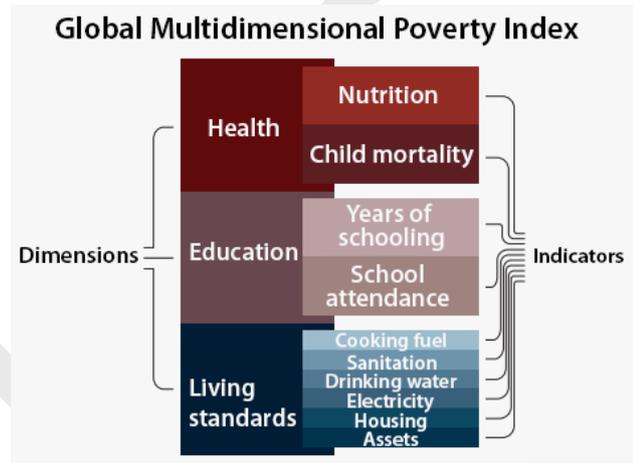
- MPI is an index designed to **measure acute poverty**, understood as a **person's inability to meet minimum internationally agreed standards**.
 - It **advances Sustainable Development Goal 1**, i.e. ending poverty in all its form.
 - The MPI **tracks deprivations in 10 indicators** across 110 countries (refer image).

Key Highlights of the Report:

- 25 Countries have halved Multidimensional Poverty** Within 15 Years.
 - 1.1 Bn/ 6.6 Bn in 110 countries remain Multidimensionally poor.
 - Nearly two-thirds of all poor people (730 mn) live in middle-income countries, and low-income countries** constitute only 10% of MPI.

India related findings

- India is one of the 25 nations** that halved its multidimensional poverty within 15 years.
 - 415 million poor people** moved out of poverty from 2005/2006 to 2019/2021.
 - Incidence of poverty fell from **55.1% to 16.4%**.
 - Deprivation in all indicators declined.**
 - The **poorest states and groups**, including children and people in disadvantaged caste groups, **had the fastest absolute progress.**



EXTENSION GIVEN TO THE TERM OF DIRECTORATE OF ENFORCEMENT (ED) DECLARED ILLEGAL BY SUPREME COURT (SC)

- SC held that extension violates the mandate of the **Supreme Court's 2021 judgment in the Common Cause v. Union of India case** that existing ED should not be given further extension.
 - SC said that extension can be granted to **high-level officials in the public interest and with reasons in writing.**
 - The Court also upheld the amendments made to the **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) Act 2003** and the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946** which allow the Centre to extend the term of the heads of ED and CBI up to 5 years.
 - These amendments were brought when SC in 2021 judgment held that extensions could only be granted in **'rare and exceptional cases** for a **short period of time.**

- ED is a **multi-disciplinary organization** mandated with **investigation of economic crimes** and violations of **foreign exchange laws**.
 - It was established 1956 under the **Ministry of Finance**.
 - It enforces the Prevention of **Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)**.
- The ED director is **appointed as per provisions of the CVC Act, 2003**.
 - Centre appoints the director **on the recommendation of a committee, with the Central Vigilance Commissioner as chairperson.**



- Issues with ED:** Interference of political executive, governed under CVC, 2003 (no specific legislation) etc.



DIGITAL INDIA MISSION CELEBRATED 8TH ANNIVERSARY

- Digital India Mission was launched in 2015, as a **flagship programme** of the Government of India with a **vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy**.
 - It has achieved **remarkable progress** in advancing **technology and empowering** millions of Indian **citizens through digital means**.
- **Initiatives taken under it:** Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan, BHIM, e-gov etc.
- **Major areas of transformation under the program:**
 - **Bridging the Digital divide:** The rural internet connectivity was expanded through projects like BharatNet, empowering millions of rural Indians.
 - **The Data Revolution:** The country now has around 850mn broadband subscribers and data consumption per user per month, stands at 19.5 GB.
 - **Digital Payments:** Nearly 82bn digital transactions were made in 2023 alone.
 - **Financial Inclusion:** The Digital India Program has played a crucial role in promoting financial inclusion in India through the JAM trinity.
 - Platforms such as **e-Government Procurement (GeM), e-Hospital, and DigiLocker** have **simplified procedures**, made essential services accessible to all.
- **Existing Challenges:** Ensuring privacy of the citizen, digital divide (rural and urban, rich and poor), etc.
- **Way Forward:** Completion of the Bharat Net Project, Empowering Cyber Security framework, Improving the digital literacy among rural areas etc.

PROGRAMME HAS THREE VISION AREAS

Digital infrastructure as a core utility to every citizen

Digital empowerment of citizens

E-governance and services on demand

GST COUNCIL ANNOUNCED TO LEVY A UNIFORM 28% TAX ON ONLINE GAMING COMPANIES

- Tax would be levied on **full value of bets or full value of consideration paid** without making any differentiation based on whether the **games required skill or were based on chance**.
 - For this, Government will bring an amendment GST Act, 2017, to include online gaming under it.
- **Online gaming is a game offered** on the internet and is accessible by a user through a computer resource or an intermediary.
- **Regulation in India:**
 - **Online gaming** is a state subject under Seventh Schedule.
 - **Telangana, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh** etc. have passed laws banning all online games, including games of skill.
 - The **Public Gambling Act of 1867** was enacted to govern gaming in India.
 - **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** implemented the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023**.
 - Inserted definitions of **'online gaming intermediary', 'online gaming self-regulatory body'**, etc. and imposed obligations on intermediaries.
 - It prohibits any game that involves **betting and wagering (risk money by guessing)**.
- **Need for Regulation:**
 - Online games can lead to aggressive behavior and extreme obedience to technology
 - Multiple health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression with disruption of sleep
 - Interfere with school and educational performance of children.

INCLUSION OF KUI LANGUAGE IN 8TH SCHEDULE OF CONSTITUTION

- Odisha Cabinet has proposed for the **inclusion of Kui language in the 8th Schedule**.
- **Kui Language** belongs to the **Dravidian Family of languages** and is spoken mainly by people of **Kondh/ Kandha Tribe**, the largest tribes of Odisha.
 - It uses Odia Script and Khondi, Gumsai are its dialects.
- **Schedule 8 of Indian Constitution:**
 - It **enlists the Official language of the Country and consists of 22 languages currently**.
 - **14 languages were originally** listed in the Constitution and the rest are added over time.
 - Sindhi was introduced in 1967, Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali in 1992, and Santali, Dogri, Maithili, and Bodo by the 92nd Amendment Act of 2003.
- **Inclusion of New Language:**
 - **Currently there is no fixed criteria for a language to be considered for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule.**
 - Though two committees under **Pahwa (1996)** and **Sitakant Mohapatra (2003)**, were set up to evolve a fixed criteria, the objective was not achieved.

SCHEDULE 8 BENEFITS

Support from Government to develop

Recognition from Sahitya Academy and wider translations of its books

Can be used in Assembly and Parliamentary debates

Can be used in All India Competitive Exams

RBI to include it in currency note denominations

50TH MEETING OF GST COUNCIL

- The 50th GST Council meeting in Delhi brought a slew of changes.
 - **Changes in Tax rates:** Foods served in Cinema halls, uncooked/unfried snack pellets, fish soluble paste rates reduced from 18% to 5%
 - **Exemptions:** Cancer drugs and medicines to rare diseases, satellite launch services by Private companies to ISRO.
 - **Increment:** On online gaming, Casinos and Races the GST is set at 28%.
 - **GST Appellate Tribunal to be setup from August 1:**
 - The tribunal is **to deal with tax disputes**, and lessen the burden on the higher judiciary.
 - The tribunal is **to have a Principal Bench in New Delhi, with the President, a judicial member, a technical member (centre) and a technical member (state). It will also have state benches.**
 - **For better Compliance:** Amendments were made in various provisions of the act to strengthen the registration process and deal with fake and fraudulent registrations in GST.
- **GST Council:**
 - The Council was **set up by the President as per Article 279A (1)** introduced by the 101st Amendment Act.
 - It **consists of the Union Finance Minister and representatives from all States and Union Territories** and was established to make decisions on various aspects of GST

ALSO IN NEWS



Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

- The Supreme Court has asked the **Centre to Clarify its stand on the act** by October 2023.
- The Act prohibited the **conversion of any place of worship and provided for the maintenance of its religious character** of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th of August 1947.
- **Exemptions:**
 - Archaeological sites covered by the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.**
 - **Ayodhya Land dispute was also exempted.**



North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

- Turkey is opposing Sweden's bid to join the grouping.



North Atlantic Treaty Organisation



Brussels, Belgium



Genesis: NATO was established in 1949 by the Washington Treaty.



Objective & Functions:

- Established as a military alliance, against the then USSR in the European region.
- Works on Collective defence principle.
- Derives its authority from article 51 of the UN charter.



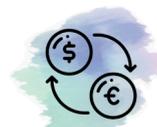
Significance of NATO:

- **Promotes democratic values** and encourages cooperation between member countries.
- **Played a crucial role in crisis management** in the region.
- Helped to maintain peace and stability in the region among member countries.



Membership:

- A willing country to join the grouping is admitted after being uniformly agreed by all the members.
- Currently it has **31 members and Finland was the last country to join.**



De-Dollarisation

- **Bangladesh and India launched the trade transaction in rupees**, a step towards de-dollarization.
- De-Dollarisation refers to **countries reducing their reliance on the US dollar**, and advancing trade and economic reserves in their own currency or alternate resources.
- It will **strengthen regional currency and trade.**
- Also, both countries will **gradually adopt Bangladeshi currency 'Taka' for trade.**
- **Exchange rate will be fixed in line** with market demand and banks involved in the process.

 <p>Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will implement interoperability between central bank digital currency (CBDC) and United Payments Interface (UPI).● In 2022, RBI launched CBDC, known as the Digital Rupee (₹) which has generally components based on blockchain technology (public ledger).<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ It is being issued in the same denominations as the paper currency and coins.➢ It is being distributed through financial intermediaries, i.e., the banks.● Users will be able to transact with ₹- R through a digital wallet offered by the banks.
 <p>Samarth (Scheme For Capacity Building In Textile Sector)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recently, empanelment of 43 new implementing partners and additional target of training around 75,000 beneficiaries has been done under the scheme● It is a demand driven and placement-oriented umbrella skilling programme of Ministry of Textiles.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ The implementation period of the scheme is extended up to March 2024.➢ Objectives<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ To provide demand-driven, placement oriented skilling programme in■ To promote skilling and skill up-gradation in the traditional sectors■ A centralized web-based Management Information System (MIS) has been placed.
 <p>Protected Areas in News</p>	<p>Mukurthi National Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recently, Tamil Nadu Police increased vigil around Mukurthi National Park to curb poaching.● It is located in the Nilgiri hills in the state of Tamil Nadu.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ It is part of the Nilgiri Bio Reserve.➢ It shares its borders with Mudumalai National Park and Silent Valley National Park.➢ Vegetation - Consists of Montane grasslands and shrublands on a high altitude with shola forests scattered around along with Rhododendron, raspberries and black berries etc.➢ Important Fauna - Barking deer, Indian Elephant, the jungle cat, wild dogs, panther, Indian leopard, the Jackal etc.
 <p>Shelf cloud</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Shelf cloud was recently witnessed in Uttarakhand.● Shelf clouds - also known as Arcus clouds - are often associated with powerful storm systems, and many times they are reported as wall clouds, funnel clouds, or rotation.● These clouds are sometimes seen beneath cumulonimbus clouds, the dense, towering vertical cloud that cause intense rain.● It is formed when a cold downdraft from a cumulonimbus cloud reaches the ground, the cold air may spread rapidly along the ground, pushing existing warm moist air upwards.<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ As this air rises, water vapour condenses into the patterns associated with shelf clouds. 
 <p>Guillain-Barré Syndrome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Peru has declared a state of national emergency amid a surge in patient suffering from Guillain-Barré syndrome.● Guillain-Barré syndrome is a rare neurological disorder in which immune system mistakenly attacks part of the peripheral nervous system.<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Network of nerves located outside of the brain and spinal cord.● It is not contagious or inherited and its exact cause remains unknown● There is no known cure for Guillain-Barré syndrome.
 <p>Brucellosis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recently, a child in Kerala has been tested positive for Brucellosis.● It is a bacterial disease, caused by various Brucella species.● It mainly infects cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs that spreads from animals to people.● It causes flu-like symptoms, including fever, weakness, malaise and weight loss.● Brucella melitensis is the most prevalent species causing human brucellosis.
 <p>Ker Puja</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is a festival celebrated in Tripura that takes place two weeks after Kharchi Puja and honours Ker, a guardian god.● During the festival entrances to Agartala are closed to create a protected area and people are not allowed to light fires, dance, sing or even wear shoes.● It is also held in few other northeastern states, as well as in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh.