SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) PROGRESS REPORT 2023: SPECIAL EDITION RELEASED BY UN

- **Report, by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA),** monitors global **progress on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**
  - **SDGs are a set of 17 goals and 169 targets** to help streamline development actions for human well-being.
- **Key Findings of Report**
  - Progress on **more than 50% of targets of SDGs is weak; on 30 %, it has stalled** or gone into reverse.
  - **COVID-19 pandemic** and triple crises of **climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution** are having a lasting impact.
  - **By 2030, some 84 million children will be out of school** and 300 million children or young people attending school will leave unable to read and write.
  - Under current trends, **575 million people** will still be living in **extreme poverty in 2030.**
- **Key areas for urgent action**
  - **Heads of state and government should recommit** accelerated and transformative action to deliver on promise of SDGs.
  - **International community** should **deliver on Addis Ababa Action Agenda** (provides a new global framework for financing sustainable development).
  - **Target policies and actions** to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality **with a focus on advancing rights of women and girls.**
  - **Boost capacity of multilateral system** to tackle emerging challenges.

ABOUT UNDESA
- **Rooted in UN Charter** and guided by transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, **it upholds the development pillar of UN.**
- It works closely with governments and stakeholders to **help countries meet their economic, social and environmental goals.**
- **Other reports by UNDESA:** Population and Vital Statistics Report, World Youth Report, World Social Report, World Economic Situation and Prospectus Report etc.

SEBI INTRODUCES BRSR CORE – FRAMEWORK FOR ASSURANCE AND ESG DISCLOSURES FOR VALUE CHAIN

- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is a **framework that helps stakeholders** understand **how an organization is managing risks and opportunities related to ESG criteria.**
- **SEBI amended** Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 in this regard **to bring following changes:**

BRSR (Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report) Core and updated BRSR	- **BRSR Core is a sub-set of the BRSR,** consisting of a set of **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under 9 ESG attributes.** o Through BRSR reporting, **SEBI has defined ESG disclosures in a standardized manner** for the listed companies. - Keeping in view **relevance to Indian / Emerging market context,** few **new KPIs have been identified** for assurance such as **job creation in small towns, openness of business, gross wages paid to women etc.** <table><tr><td>**Financial Year**</td><td>**Applicability of BRSR Core to top listed entities (by market capitalization)**</td></tr><tr><td>2023 – 24</td><td>Top 150 listed entities</td></tr><tr><td>2024 – 25</td><td>Top 250 listed entities</td></tr><tr><td>2025 – 26</td><td>Top 500 listed entities</td></tr><tr><td>2026 – 27</td><td>Top 1000 listed entities</td></tr></table>
ESG Disclosures for value chain	- **Will be applicable to top 250 listed entities** (by market capitalization) from **FY 2024-25.** - Disclosures for value chain **will be made by listed company as per BRSR Core** as part of its annual report. o Value chain shall **encompass top upstream and downstream partners** of a listed entity, cumulatively **comprising 75% of its purchases / sales** (by value) respectively.

SCIENTISTS SAY 'ANTHROPOCENE EPOCH' BEGAN IN 1950s

- **Sediments study at Crawford Lake** (Canada) have provided **evidence of beginning of Anthropocene epoch.**
  - ➢ Crawford Lake was chosen because it is meromictic (water lavers there do not mix) and its **layers of sediment preserved annual impact of human activities** on Earth's climate.
- Anthropocene epoch is a **proposed epoch that denotes** present geological time interval, in which **Earth's ecosystem has gone through radical changes due to human impact,** especially since onset of Industrial Revolution.

Divsions of Cainozoic Era				
Era	Period	Epoch	Age/ Years Before Present	Life/ Major Events
Cainczoic From 65 million years to the present times!	Quaternary	Holocene Pleistocene	0 - 10,000 10,000 2 million	Modern Man Homo Sapiens
	Tertiary	Pliocene Miocene	2-5 million 5 - 24 million	Early Human Ancestor Ape: Flowering Plants and Trees
		Oligocene Eocene Palaeocene	24 - 37 million 37-58 Million 57-65 Million	Anthropoid Ape Rabbits and Hare Small Mammals: Rats - Mice

  - ➢ **Numerous phenomena** are associated with this epoch, such as **global warming, sea-level rise, ocean acidification, mass-scale soil erosion,** deadly heat waves etc.
  - ➢ Term was first **coined by Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen and biology professor Eugene Stoermer** in 2000.
- However, there are **disagreements over enough evidence to prove** its advent.
- **Earth's geological time scale** is divided into five broad categories: eons, epochs, eras, periods and ages.
  - ➢ **Officially we're in** Phanerozoic eon, Cenozoic era, Quaternary period, Holocene epoch and Meghalayan age.
    - ■ **Meghalayan age (4200 years ago)** begins with an **abrupt mega-drought** that caused a collapse of several civilisations.
    - ■ Geologists **found proof** of this event **in Meghalaya's Mawmluh Cave system.**

RISING CHALLENGE OF URBAN FLOODS IN INDIA

- There has been an **increasing trend of urban flood disasters in India in recent years** whereby major cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata etc. have been severely affected.
- **Urban flooding occurs very quickly** (as compared to rural flooding) as urbanization leads to **developed catchments,** which **increases flood peaks from 1.8 to 8 times** and flood volumes by up to 6 times.
- **Factors contributing to Urban Flooding**
  - ➢ **Meteorological:** Heavy Rainfall, Cyclonic storms, cloudbursts etc.
  - ➢ **Hydrological:** Synchronization of runoffs from various parts of watershed, Absence of over bank flow, channel network etc.
  - ➢ **Human related:** Land use changes, Encroachment of the flood plain, Changing urban micro-climate etc.
- **Initiatives taken**
  - ➢ **Urban flooding termed as a separate disaster,** delinked from floods along with **separate NDMA guidelines for the same.**
  - ➢ **Integrated Flood Warning System called 'IFLOWS-Mumbai' by** National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR).
  - ➢ **Integrated coastal flood warning system** called CFLOWS by NCCR.
  - ➢ Development of **sponge cities under Jal Jeevan Mission** (Urban).
- Globally, there has been a **push towards maximise green and blue infrastructure** such as urban forests, lakes and wetlands, and **minimise grey infrastructure** such as concretised or impermeable surfaces.

IMPACTS OF URBAN FLOODING

Damage to vital urban infrastructure	Loss of life and damage to property	Risk of epidemics	Deterioration of water quality	Economic losses

STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD (SOFI) REPORT RELEASED BY FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF UN (FAO)

- SOFI is an **annual flagship report,** jointly prepared **by FAO** and several other organisations, that **analyses world's progress** towards **ending hunger, achieving food security** and **improving nutrition.**
- **Key Highlights**
  - ➢ While **global hunger numbers have stalled** between 2021 and 2022, **over 122 million more people are facing hunger since 2019** due to pandemic and repeated weather shocks and conflicts.
  - ➢ In 2021, **22.3% children were stunted** (low height-for-age), **6.8% were wasted** (weight too low for their height), and **5.6% were overweight.**
  - ➢ Almost **600 million people** will be **chronically undernourished in 2030.**
- Report talks about **how urbanization**, combined with rising incomes, growing employment and changing lifestyles, **is driving challenges and opportunities throughout agrifood systems.**
  - ➢ **Challenges**: Increasing availability of cheap, energy-dense and highly processed foods; exclusion of small farmers from formalizing value chains etc.
  - ➢ **Opportunities**: increased employment along food value chains, improvements in variety of nutritious foods etc.
- **Recommendations**
  - ➢ **Connectivity** between urban, peri-urban and rural areas to increase access to affordable healthy diets.
  - ➢ **Improved access to** production **inputs and irrigation** infrastructure.
  - ➢ **Increase public investment in R&D** to develop technologies and innovations to create healthier food environments.

INDIGENOUS DIFFERENTIAL GLOBAL NAVIGATION SATELLITE SYSTEM (DGNSS) – "SAGAR SAMPARK" INAUGURATED BY MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS (MOPSW)

- DGNSS is a **terrestrial based enhancement system which corrects errors and inaccuracies in Global Navigation Satellite System** (GNSS) allowing for more accurate positioning information.
  - ➤ GNSS refers to a **constellation of satellites providing signals from space** that transmit positioning and timing data **to GNSS receivers** to have Global coverage.
  - ➤ **Major GNSS are: GPS** (USA), **GLONASS** (Russia), **Galileo** (Europe), **BeiDou** (China), **NAVIC**(India).
- DGNSS involves **having reference stations,** at precisely known locations that **provides real-time corrections for GNSS signals.**
  - ➤ DGNSS systems **provide shore-to-ship services.**
- **Significance of DGNSS**
  - ➤**Providing safe navigation and reducing risk of collisions,** groundings, and accidents in port and harbour areas.
  - ➤Fulfilment of international navigation obligations of International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA).
  - ➤**GPS error correction accuracy improved** from 5 to 10 meters **to less than 5 meters** for 100 Nautical Miles from Indian coastlines.
  - ➤**Will enhance capability of Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships** (DGLL) in Radio Aids to Marine Navigation.
    - ▪ DGLL, a **subordinate office under MoPSW**, provides General Aids to Marine Navigation along the Indian coast.

- **IMO:** UN specialized agency with responsibility for safety and security of shipping and prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.
- **SOLAS Convention** in its successive forms is related the safety of merchant ships. First version was adopted in 1914, in response to Titanic disaster.
- **IALA:** Established in 1957, it is a non-profit, international technical association.

ALSO IN NEWS

Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)	• **Meeting of the Executive Board** of A-WEB held.
	• A-WEB, established in 2013, is the **world's largest international organization** in the field of **election management.**
	  ➤ It currently **comprises 119 Election Management Bodies** (EMBs) **from 110 countries.**
	  ➤ **Election Commission of India** was A-WEB **Chair for 2019-22** term and is presently a **member of its Executive Board for 2022-24.**
	• **An India A-WEB Centre has been established** at New Delhi for sharing the best practices and training and capacity building of officials of A-WEB members.

Muslim World League (MWL)	• **PM held talks with the Secretary General** of MWL. • MWL is an international NGO headquartered in Makkah, with **members from all Islamic countries and sects.** • It **aims to present the true Islam** and its **tolerant principles,** provide **humanitarian aid,** realize the message of Islam and **ward off movements calling for extremism, violence and exclusion** etc. • MWL is a **member of UNESCO and UNICEF** and an **Observer in** consultative status with UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). • **Secretariat General is the executive wing** of the organization.

Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)	• IICA is an **autonomous institution,** under **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), focusing on niche areas of corporate affairs** as a premier institution in the country.
	  ➤ **IICA was registered** as a society in 2008 under **Societies Registration Act, 1860.**
	  ➤ IICA Society is **headed by Minister of Corporate Affairs,** who is **Ex-officio President** of IICA Society.
	• It provides **policy advocacy, research and capacity building support** to Government, Corporates and other stakeholders **to drive corporate growth, reforms and regulations.**

AuditOnline	• **Action Taken Report (ATR) Module** of AuditOnline **was launched.**
	• AuditOnline is an **open-source applications,** developed as **a part of Panchayat Enterprise Suite** under **e-panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP),** initiated by **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR).**
	  ➤ **Under Digital India Programme,** MoPR is implementing **e-Panchayat MMP** to transform **functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions** (PRIs).
	  ➤ Under this, **eGramSwaraj**, a simplified work-based accounting application, **was also launched.**
	• It facilitates internal & external audit of Government department / PRIs.

State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF)	• **Ministry of Finance released** amount to SDRF. • SDRF is **constituted in each State** under **Disaster Management Act, 2005** for responses **to notified disasters.** • **Central Government contributes 75% to the SDRF in general States and 90% in North-East and Himalayan States.** ➤ **Annual Central contribution is released** in two equal instalments as per **Finance Commission's recommendation.** • SDRF is **used only for expenditure for providing immediate relief** to victims **of notified calamities** like cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloud burst, pest attack and frost & cold wave.

Phosphate	• **New discovery of Phosphate rocks from Norway** could help electric vehicle industry.
	  ➤ Presently, **Morocco has 70% of world's phosphate reserves.**
	• Phosphate is a **sedimentary rock formed by** accumulation of **organic matter on the ocean floor.**
	• **Applications:**
	  ➤ Phosphate rock is **processed to produce phosphorous,** used in **fertilizer.**
	  ➤ Phosphate is **one of the key materials** used in a type of **lithium ion battery.**
	  ➤ Phosphate **can also be turned into phosphoric acid,** used in **food and cosmetics** to **animal feed** and **electronics.**

Salsola oppositifolia Desfontania	• **It is a new species,** discovered recently, that **belongs to family of Amaranthaceae.** • It is a **perennial shrub that grows in saline, arid to semi-arid environments** of Kutch district (Khadir Bet and bela region) of Gujarat. ➤ It is **prostrate** (woody plant) and unlike other species of Salsola, does not have any hairs. • **Other species of Salsola genus discovered in India:** Salsola kali, Salsola hatmanii, Salsola monoptera, Caroxylon imbricatum (Salsola baryosma) and Halogeton glomeratus (Salsola glomerata). • Plants of Salsola genus **have salty juice stored in their leaves,** are **used in manufacturing soaps** and also.

Nature Restoration Law	• **European Parliament passed** the Nature Restoration Law with an aim **to repair damage done to Europe's nature by 2050.**
	• **It will set restoration targets and obligations such as**
	  ➤ **Reversing the decline of pollinator** populations by 2030.
	  ➤ **No net loss of green urban spaces** by 2030.
	  ➤ **Reduce use and risk of chemical pesticides** by 50% by 2030.

Places In news	**Solomon Islands (Capital: Honiara)**
	• Recently **China and Solomon Islands** signed **diplomatic agreements.**
	• **Political Boundaries**
	  ➤ Solomon Islands are **an archipelagic state** comprising of **volcanic islands and coral atolls** in Melanesia, located in **southwest Pacific Ocean.**
	  ➤ It has **no direct neighbor.**
	  ➤ It is **part of volcanic arc** extending **from extending from Papua New Guinea to Vanuatu.**
	• **Geographical Features**
	  ➤ **Climate is tropical** ocean.
	  ➤ **Highest Point:** Mount Popomanaseu.