

NEWS TODAY

US DECIDES TO REJOIN UNESCO

• US has decided to rejoin UNESCO from July 2023 and will **pay the dues of around \$619 million to UNESCO.**

• Background

- In 2011, U.S. and Israel **stopped funding UNESCO after it voted to include Palestine as a member state**, and both countries lost their voting rights in 2013.
- In 2017, US **decided to withdraw from UNESCO, citing anti-Israel bias, extreme politicization, financial woes and management problems.**
- Earlier, US **pulled out of UNESCO in 1984** because it viewed the **agency as mismanaged, corrupt and used to advance Soviet interests. It rejoined in 2003.**

• Reasons for US rejoining UNESCO

- **Counter China's presence as China was filling the gap** left by U.S. in UNESCO policy-making **particularly in setting standards for artificial intelligence and technology education** around the world.
- **Administrative reforms** in UNESCO making it efficient and financially sound.
- **UNESCO's efforts to decrease politicised debate**, especially on Middle East Issues.

• Significance of US rejoining UNESCO

- **Financial boost to UNESCO** as U.S. contributed **22% of the agency's overall funding** before leaving.
- US presence would **promote vision of a free world.**



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) HQ
Paris, France

About: Specialised agency of UN, established in 1945 to **contributes to peace and security by promoting international cooperation in education, sciences, culture, communication and information.**

Objectives: Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning; Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges etc.

Membership: 193 countries and 12 Associate Members

Composition: Secretariat, headed by Director-General, implements the decisions of General Conference and Executive Board.

Awards related to UNESCO

- UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation programme (awarded to private individuals and organizations).
- UNESCO Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize awarded (to living individuals, active institutions) for promoting peace.

Other key information:

- It is also a member of United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).
- Three UNESCO member states are **not UN members: Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine.**
- Three UN member states (**Israel, Liechtenstein, United States**) are **not UNESCO members.**

G20 COUNTRIES INCLUDING INDIA ARE FUELLING MODERN SLAVERY, SAYS NEW REPORT

• Walk Free Foundation released the **Global Slavery Index 2023, an assessment of modern slavery conditions in 160 countries.**

- Index uses the data released by International Labour Organisation (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

• Modern slavery refers to **situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, or deception.**

- It is **an umbrella term that comprises various instruments of repression.** (see image)

• Key findings

- **50 million people were living in modern slavery** on any given day in 2021, an **increase of 10 million people since 2016.**

- Among the 50 million, **28 million suffer from forced labour and 22 million from forced marriages.**

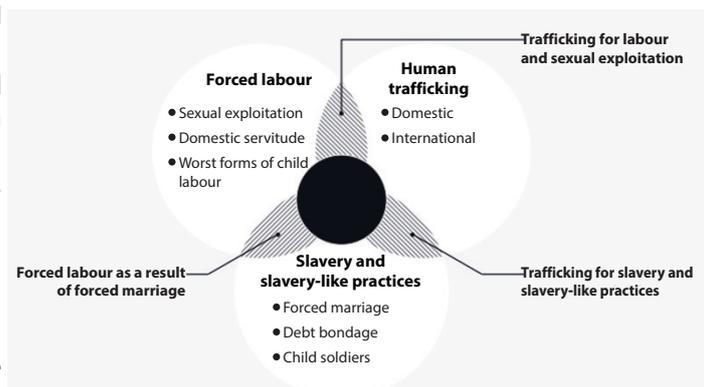
- **India tops the list with 11 million people working as forced labourers**, followed by China, Russia.

- **North Korea** followed by Eritrea has **highest prevalence and Switzerland** followed by Norway have **lowest prevalence** of modern slavery.

- **Driving factors of slavery: Climate degradation, gender inequality, COVID-19, and conflict.**

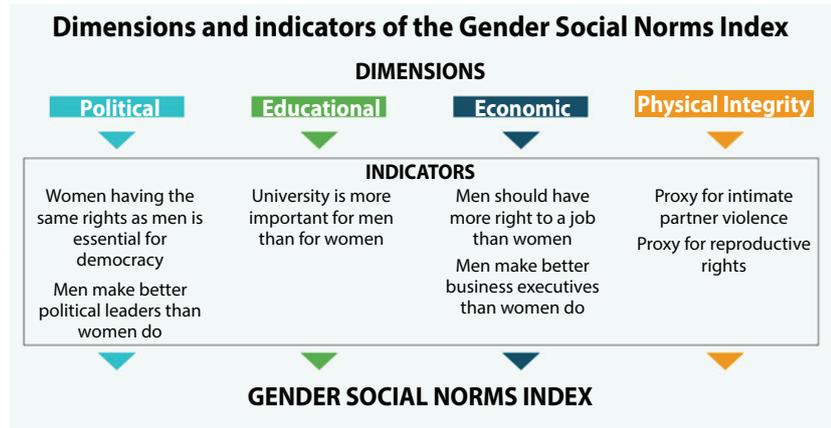
• Recommendations

- **Recognise and respond** to modern slavery as an intersectional issue.
- **Strengthen social protection and safety nets** to boost resilience.
- **Repealing migration policies** that place national security above human rights.



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) RELEASED 2023 GENDER SOCIAL NORMS INDEX (GSNI) REPORT

- Report is titled as **'Breaking Down Gender Biases: Shifting social norms towards gender equality'**.
- GSNI captures **beliefs, biases and prejudices regarding gender equality in capabilities and rights**, which provides an account of the root causes of gender inequality.
- GSNI covers **four key dimensions** and their indicators (refer infographic). Each indicator takes a **value of 1 when an individual has a bias and 0 when the individual does not**.
 - GSNI is **calculated using data from World Values Survey** which are used to **create seven indicators using data from 80 countries and territories**, covering 85% of global population.



• Key findings

- Close to **9 out of 10 men and women hold biases** against women.
- Nearly **50%** of people believe that **men make better political leaders** than women do, and **around 40%** believe that **men make better business executives** than women do.
- Biased gender social norms are **major impediment to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls** (SDG 5).
- Gender biases are **pronounced in both lower and higher HDI countries**.

• Reasons for persistence of gender social norms

- **Socialization into gender norms** from early age and parental attitudes.
- **Institutionalization of discriminatory social practices** and gender hierarchies.
- **Social sanctioning**, where behaviour abiding with norms is socially rewarded.

GLOBAL DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE (DPI) SUMMIT INAUGURATED IN PUNE AS PART OF G20 DIGITAL ECONOMY WORKING GROUP (DEWG) MEET

- Under India's Presidency, **G20 DEWG has identified DPI as a key priority area**. Theme of the Summit is **"DPI for Ease of Living, Ease of Doing Business, and Ease of Governance."**

• Key outcome of summit

- India signed **MoU with three countries** namely Armenia, Sierra Leone, and Suriname on sharing India Stack.
- India floated the concept of **'One Future Alliance'**, a voluntary initiative to **bring together all countries and stakeholders to synergize, shape, architect and design future of DPI** that could be used by all countries.

- DPI refers to a **set of shared digital building blocks**, such as applications, systems, and platforms, powered by **interoperable open standards or specifications**.

- **India Stack** is the collective name of a set of **commonly used DPIs in India**. It consists of **three different layers**:

- **Unique identity** (Aadhaar); **Complimentary payments systems** (UPI, Aadhaar Payments Bridge, Aadhaar Enabled Payment Service); and **Data exchange** (DigiLocker and Account Aggregator).

• Benefits of DPI

- **Better delivery of health and education services** to accumulate human capital and foster growth.
- Enhance **access to payment and financial services**.
- **Support inclusive growth**; foster innovation and competition; boost government revenue collection etc.

SCIENTIST SPOT A SOLAR ERUPTION THAT MAINTAINS CONSTANT TEMPERATURE FOR SIX YEARS

- Scientists from Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital **found that core of a solar eruption or Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) that occurred in 2017** had maintained a constant temperature.

- ARIES, Nainital, is an autonomous institute under **Department of Science and Technology**.

• Highlights of finding

- Scientists observed that **despite the core expanding**, which usually leads to cooling, **temperature remained constant**.
- **Density of the core decreased by about 3.6 times** as it moved outward.
- **Expansion of the core behaved more like an isothermal process** (constant temperature) rather than an **adiabatic process** (where heat exchange occurs).

• Significance of finding:

- **Improve the understanding of how such eruptions can impact communication systems** on Earth.
- **India's first solar mission, Aditya-L1**, equipped with Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC), will **provide more data about CMEs thermodynamic properties in inner corona**.

- CME is a **giant cloud of solar plasma drenched with magnetic field lines** that is blown away from Sun often during strong, long-duration solar flares and filament eruptions

- CME contains **particle radiation (mostly protons and electrons) and powerful magnetic fields**. They cause disruption of space weather and satellite failures, and power outages etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Betelgeuse

- Betelgeuse, **seventh brightest star in sky** (discounting the Sun), is spotted in constellation Orion. It is also called as **'Thiruvathirai' or 'Ardra'** in Indian astronomy.
- Star is in its **late carbon-burning stage** as it has **already consumed both hydrogen and helium**.
- When it would **consume all the elements of periodic table**, the gravity would **compress the core and turn it into a neutron star or a black hole**.

G20 DEVELOPMENT MINISTERIAL MEETING CONCLUDED IN VARANASI UNDER INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY THEME "ONE EARTH, ONE FAMILY, ONE FUTURE"

• Development Ministers have unanimously adopted the **two outcome documents** (refer table)

<p>High-level Principles on Lifestyles (HLPs) for Sustainable Development</p>	<p>It outlined 9HLPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote inter-linkages between development, environment and climate agendas. • Support international and national efforts towards meeting the basic needs of all people. • Promote environmentally friendly individual and community behaviour. • Promote sustainable production. • Mainstream sustainability of all components/aspects of economy. • Leverage potential of data and digital technology for sustainable ecosystem. • Recognize and amplify role of local communities, local and regional governments and traditional knowledge in supporting sustainable lifestyles. • Recognize crucial role of financing in achieving development, environment and climate goals. • Strengthen international cooperation, collective action and partnership.
<p>G20 2023 Action Plan on Accelerating Progress on SDGs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be focusing on key transformative transition areas i.e., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital transformation. ○ Gender equality and empowerment of women. ○ Implementing sustainable, inclusive and just transitions globally, while leaving no one behind. • Financing for accelerating progress on SDGs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhanced access to adequate finance from all sources is critical. ○ Encourage innovative inclusive financing mechanisms such as blended finance, green bonds in developing countries. ○ Reaffirm the need to assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability.

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>Sunflower seeds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunflowers are native primarily to North and South America. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The leaves are used as fodder, the flowers yield a yellow dye. ➢ Sunflower oil cake is used for stock and poultry feeding. ➢ Since these seeds have very high oil content, they are one of the main sources used to produce polyunsaturated oil. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sunflower oil ranks as the fourth most produced oil in world. ➢ Benefits of seeds: Excellent source of essential fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They are anti-inflammatory, antifungal, antibacterial, wound healing.
 <p>EKUVERIN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is joint military exercise between Indian Army and Maldives National Defence Force.
 <p>Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIPRI launches its annual assessment of state of Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. • Key findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ USA has largest number of deployed nuclear warheads followed by Russia, France and UK while Russia has highest total inventory of nuclear warheads followed by USA and China. ➢ India, China, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel have no deployed nuclear warheads. ➢ India has total 164 nuclear warhead stockpiles. ➢ Overall, number of nuclear warheads continues to decline, primarily due to USA and Russia dismantling retired warheads. ➢ With China modernizing and expanding its nuclear arsenal, India and Pakistan also appear to be increasing the size of their nuclear weapon inventories. ➢ Raw material for nuclear weapons is either Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) or separated Plutonium. India has produced mainly plutonium. • SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.



 <p>Green Hydrogen from Seawater</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IIT-Madras generated hydrogen from seawater using solar energy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ In place of pure or fresh water, the team has developed an electrolyser using alkaline seawater. ➢ They used a carbon-based support material for the electrodes instead of metals. ● There are various types of hydrogen based on types of extraction. ● Green Hydrogen is produced using electrolysis of water with electricity generated by renewable energy.
 <p>Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) has dropped over 50,000 defunct proposals for infrastructure units under PMJVK. ● About PMJVK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Ministry: MoMA ➢ Objective: Develop community infrastructure and create basic amenities in identified areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving socio-economic conditions of minorities and providing basic amenities to them for improving quality of life of people. ➢ Funding pattern: 90:10 (Centre and State/UT Administration for North East States, Hilly States (J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand)/ UTs with Legislation); 100% (UTs without Legislature); and 60:40 (all other States/ UT).
 <p>Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav (KSPU)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KSPU campaign was launched in 2022 by Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) in partnership with Ministry of Education and UNICEF. ● It is a campaign under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) program to reintegrate out-of-school adolescent girls (aged 11 to 14) into formal education and skilling system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It builds on existing schemes and programmes such as schemes for Adolescent Girls (SAG), BBBP, and National Education Policy (NEP). ● Under KSPU, MoWCD has brought back 1 lakh drop-out girls within the fold of formal education since July 2022.
 <p>JATAN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Central government plans to complete 3D digitisation of all museums under its administrative control by 2023 end for better conservation of artefacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ This process is being carried out by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). ● 3D digitisation would be done using JATAN virtual museum builder software which has been designed and developed by Human Centres Design and Computing Group, Centre for Development of Smart Computing, Pune. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ JATAN is a digital collection management system for Indian museums. ➢ It can create 3D virtual galleries and provide public access through web, mobile or touch screen kiosks.
 <p>Geographical Indications (GI) tag</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kari Ishad mango from Uttara Karnataka has earned GI tag. ● Kari Ishad mango is grown predominantly around Ankola. Additionally, it is grown in Karwar and to a certain extent in Kumta of Uttara Karnataka. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Features: unique aroma, luscious taste, high amount of pulp. ➢ Ishad mango has two variants – Kari Ishad, which has thin skin, more pulp and is sweeter, and Bili Ishad, which has thick skin and has less pulp and sweetness. ● GI is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
 <p>Places In news</p>	<p>Cuba (Capital: Havana)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● US confirmed that China has had a spy base in Cuba since at least 2019. ● Political Boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Country of West Indies, the largest single island of the archipelago. ➢ Situated just south of Tropic of Cancer at intersection of Atlantic Ocean (north and east), Gulf of Mexico (west), and Caribbean Sea (south). ➢ Neighbouring country includes Haiti (east); Jamaica (south); Bahamas archipelago (northern coast); and US (north across the Straits of Florida). ● Geographical features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Major river: Cauto (longest), Guantanamo. ➢ Highest Peak: Turquino Peak in Sierra Maestra range. ➢ Important cities and places: Santiago, Trinidad, Guantanamo Bay. 