

UNICEF releases The Climate-Changed Child: A Children's Climate Risk Index Supplement report

➤ The report builds on UNICEF's Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI) components i.e.,

- ⊕ **Water scarcity** (physical availability of water) and **Water vulnerability** (combination of water scarcity and lack of access to drinking water service).

➤ **Key findings:**

- ⊕ Almost **1 billion children** are exposed to **high or extremely high-water stress**.
- ⊕ **India, Niger, Eritrea, Yemen, and Burkina Faso** had the **highest overall child exposure to high or extremely high-water vulnerability**.
- ⊕ Children, particularly **those in low-income communities**, are highly susceptible to the negative effects of climate change.

➤ **Impact of climate change on children:**

- ⊕ **Killer childhood diseases** are **spreading more** because of climate change.
- ⊕ Infants are less able to **regulate body temperature**, making them **vulnerable during heatwaves**.
- ⊕ Children are more **likely to suffer from air pollution** than adults.
- ⊕ Climate change **exacerbates child malnutrition** through **crop failures and rising food prices**.
- ⊕ Increased disasters disrupt the **education of forty million children** annually.

➤ **Recommendations:**

- ⊕ Elevate children in **COP28 decisions**, and convene expert dialogue.
- ⊕ Embed children, intergeneration equity in **Global Stocktake**.
- ⊕ Include children, and climate-resilient essential services in the **Global Goal for Adaptation**.
- ⊕ Make **Loss and Damage Fund** child-responsive.

unicef 

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)


New York,
USA

Genesis: Established in 1946 as United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

Became permanent part of UN system in 1953.

Mission: protect children's rights; help meet their basic needs.

Countries: It works in more than 190 countries and territories including India.

Executive Board: Governing body of UNICEF with 36 member states elected to 3-year terms by the Economic and Social Council.

Flagship report: The State of the World's Children Report.

NITI Aayog released the report Learnings for Large-Scale Transformation in School Education

➤ This is the outcome report on the Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E) project implementation in Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh.

➤ **Key Findings:**

- ⊕ Despite similar enrolment, India has **five times more schools than China**. Over **50% of primary schools in many Indian states** enrol fewer than **60 students**.
- ⊕ Approximately **2-5 lakh untrained teachers** in primary and upper primary levels, failing to meet the **Right to Education requirements**.
- ⊕ **Jharkhand merged 4,380 schools**, resulting in savings of Rs **400 crore through reduced teacher and infrastructure requirements**, thus optimizing resources.

➤ **Suggested 6 areas for education transformation:**

- ⊕ Address **sub-scale schools, inadequately resourced schools** with political support.
- ⊕ **Solve teacher vacancies** via restructuring and recruitment e.g., via **Cadre restructuring**.
- ⊕ **Re-think teacher education** to improve quality.
- ⊕ **Enforce learning outcome accountability** via competency-based assessment reforms.
- ⊕ **Focus on Early Childhood Education** and multilingual education.
- ⊕ **Strengthen governance** in education departments for self-improvement.

➤ **Other Recommendations:**

- ⊕ **Merge small, and low-enrolment schools with nearby ones**, etc.
- ⊕ States need to consider the **decentralization of powers** to principals, district, and block officers, etc.

➤ **SATH Project: Launched by NITI Aayog in 2017,**

- ⊕ It is a program providing '**Sustainable Action for Transforming Human capital**' with the State Governments and SATH aims to initiate **transformation in the education and health sectors**.

- ◆ It proposed to identify and build **three future 'role model' states** in the **education and health sectors**.

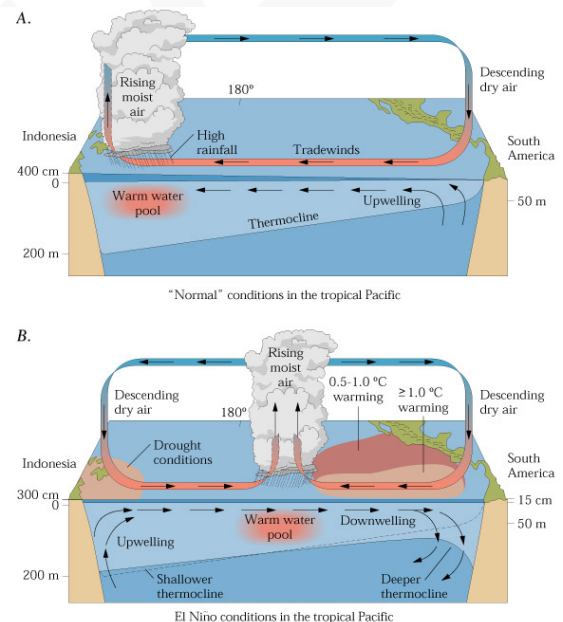
- ⊕ **SATH-E Project focuses on** ensuring quality of school education and make the education growth process socially inclusive, regionally balanced, and sustainable.

State Bank of India Report Moots Inducting More Women Business Correspondents

- **Business Correspondents** are retail agents engaged by banks to provide banking services at locations other than a bank branch/ATM and help reach banking services in rural and remote parts of the country.
 - ⊖ E.g., 'Bank Sakhi' (or female banker friend) model.
 - ⊖ RBI launched the **Banking Correspondent's (BCs) model** in 2006 to expand **Financial Inclusion**.
- **Functions under BC Model:** disbursal and collection of small-value credit, receipt, and **delivery of small-value remittances**, and **sale of products like micro-insurance, pension, etc.**
- **Key Highlights**
 - ⊖ Presently Women agents **comprise less than 10% of the BC workforce**, this should be increased to 30 % of the BC workforce.
 - ⊖ Due to socio-economic **constraints limiting job options**, female agents are less prone to malpractice and more dedicated.
 - ⊖ Increasing women's involvement in **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana** improved the **financial status** of female borrowers.
 - ⊖ **Women customers** find women agents **easier to approach**, trustworthy, and **great at maintaining confidentiality**.
- **Significance of Women BC:** potentially act as **role models** for financial inclusion.
- **Challenges:** lack of **digital literacy**, **inadequate training**, low and irregular income, limited mobility, security risks, etc.

Once in a century flooding swamps Somalia after historic drought: UN

- The heavy **seasonal rainfall** has been **worsened** due to the combined impact of two climate phenomena, **El Niño** and the **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)**, as per UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).
 - ⊖ Across the Horn of Africa, **El Niños** and a **positive IOD** are associated with **above-normal rains and flooding**.
- **El Niño:** It is a **climate pattern associated** with the warming of the ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean,
 - ⊖ Generally, El Nino occurs on average **every 2-7 years**
 - ⊖ It can lead to a **weakening of the monsoon circulation over the Indian subcontinent**.
- **IOD:** Also known as **Indian Nino**, IOD refers to the **difference in sea surface temperature** between the **eastern and western sides of the Indian Ocean**. It has **3 phases**:
 - ⊖ **Positive:** The western side is **warmer** than the eastern side.
 - ⊖ **Negative:** **Cooler western side** and **warmer eastern side**.
 - ⊖ **Neutral:** Temperatures are **close to normal** across the Indian Ocean.
- **About UNOCHA:** It is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a **coherent response to emergencies**.



PRS Legislative Research released the 'State of State Finances 2023-24' Report

- **Key highlights**
 - ⊖ **Status of revenue receipts:** States' revenue receipts have **returned to the pre-pandemic level**.
 - ⊖ **Revenue deficit:** Despite the revenue deficit grants by the Centre, several states have **continued to face revenue deficits**.
 - ⊖ **Impact of GST:** State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) collections as a percentage of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) remain below pre-GST levels.
 - ◆ With the **GST compensation grants having ended in June 2022**, there has been an **adverse impact** on some states.
 - ⊖ **Expenditure on subsidies:** Over the last several years, states have allocated **8-9% of their revenue to subsidies**, mainly for power.
 - ◆ There's a **noticeable increase in subsidies for non-merit goods** in various states.
 - ⊖ **Power distribution companies (DISCOMS):** In 2021-22, state DISCOMS cut financial losses, but many still carry substantial debt.
 - ◆ This is a **contingent liability for states** and poses financial risks.
 - ⊖ **Capital outlay by states:** States continue to have a **high level of committed expenditure**, and **persistent revenue deficit**, thus constraining capital outlay
 - ⊖ **States off-budget borrowings decreased:** Off-budget borrowings are **raised by government-owned entities**, but the interest and principal of such loans are serviced from the government budget.

About GST compensation

- **GST (Compensation to States) Act 2017** was enacted to levy **Compensation Cess** for providing **compensation to States** for loss of revenue due to GST implementation.
 - ⊖ This **compensation** was to be provided for a **period of 5 years** which ended in **June 2022**.
 - ⊖ However, the **period of levying compensation cess** was **extended for additional 4 years** till **March 2026** to repay borrowings made in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

UNFCCC secretariat releases Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement Synthesis report 2023

- The report analysed NDCs of 195 Parties to the Paris Agreement.
- **Key highlights**
 - ⊖ **World is off track to Paris Agreement goals:** Implementing latest NDCs will increase emissions by approximately 8.8% by 2030, relative to 2010 levels.
 - ◆ Emissions need to be cut by 45% by 2030, compared to 2010 levels to achieve Paris Agreement goal (IPCC report, 2018).
 - ⊖ **Indigenous Peoples and local communities:** 40% of Parties outlined the roles of local communities and rights of Indigenous Peoples in adaptation components of NDCs.
 - ◆ This includes addressing the specific vulnerabilities of Indigenous Peoples, emphasizing the importance of utilising Indigenous knowledge to enhance climate efforts, etc.
 - ⊖ **Gender-sensitive approach:** Parties are increasingly recognizing gender integration as a means to enhance the ambition and effectiveness of their climate action.
- **Recommendation:** To achieve emission peaking before 2030, essential factors include:
 - ⊖ Enhanced access to financial resources,
 - ⊖ Technology transfer,
 - ⊖ Availability of market-based mechanisms.
- **UNFCCC secretariat** (UN Climate Change) is tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change
 - ⊖ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, is the parent treaty of the Paris Agreement.

Paris Agreement and NDCs

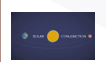
- **Adopted in 2015** by all 196 Parties, this international treaty is legally binding.
 - ⊖ Its goal is to keep the global average temperature increase well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to limit the rise to 1.5°C.
- NDCs, are countries' self-defined national climate pledges under the Paris Agreement to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
 - ⊖ NDCs are required to be updated every five years with increasingly higher ambition

Also in News



Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT)

- India has reportedly requested evidence from US under MLAT in connection with an attack on Indian consulate in San Francisco.
- MLAT is a bilateral treaty/Agreement that provides a mechanism for seeking assistance from other contracting States in civil and criminal matter.
 - ⊖ **Criminal Matters:** Assistance is sought for prevention, investigation and prosecution of crime. Ministry of Home Affairs is nodal Ministry
 - ⊖ **Civil and Commercial Matters:** Assistance is sought for service of all kinds of judicial processes, including summons etc. Ministry of Law and Justice is nodal Ministry.



Mars solar conjunction

- **Mars solar conjunction** impacted the NASA robotic probes on planet Mars.
- During this phenomenon, the Sun comes between Earth and Mars.
 - ⊖ Occur this year- 11th November to 25th November.
- It happens once every two years.
- **Impact:** Solar conjunction can cause the sun's corona to eject ionized gas, interfering with radio signals used to communicate with Mars spacecraft.



National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)

- As per NOTTO data, 80% of organ recipients in India between 1995 and 2021 were men.
- NOTTO is set up under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
 - ⊖ It is the apex centre for procurement and distribution of Organs and Tissues and registry of Organs and Tissues Donation and Transplantation in the country.
 - ⊖ **Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act 2011** has established two divisions:
 - ◆ National Human Organ and Tissue Removal and Storage Network
 - ⊖ National Biomaterial Centre (National Tissue Bank)



Golden Passport

- Few Indian businessmen got a golden passport.
- It is a facility offered by certain countries where foreigners can get citizenship through significant investments.
- **Benefits-** greatly facilitate business operations, Visa-free travel, tax benefits, market penetration, etc.
- **Reported to be misused** for money laundering, tax evasion, etc.

Annapurna Certificate Programme

- Six Indian restaurants from around the world awarded Annapurna Certificate.
- The Annapurna Certificate Programme is to recognize restaurants abroad that promote Indian culinary and cuisine traditions.
 - ⊖ Initiative by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)
 - ⊖ Awarded every year.
- ICCR-
 - ⊖ It was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
 - ⊖ It participates in policies for external cultural relations.

Picocystis Salinarum

- A researcher unveiled the capability of Picocystis Salinarum (green algae) found in hypersaline soda lake Sambhar (Rajasthan) to survive extreme environments.
 - ⊖ It was spotted for first time in India only in the Sambhar Lake.
- Picocystis Salinarum is an extremophile (organisms that live in extreme environments), it survives by resorting to physiological adaptation to highly saline-alkaline/hyperosmotic conditions.
- Significance: facilitate research for applications like microalgal bioproducts and increasing salt tolerance in plants.



National Health Claim Exchange (NHCC)

- National Health Authority (NHA) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India have joined hands to operationalize NHCC.
- Benefits: seamless interoperability of health claims processing.
- NHCC
 - ⊖ It is a digital health claims platform developed by NHA.
 - ⊖ Objectives:
 - ◆ Reduce receivable cycles and increase acceptance of cashless claims.
 - ◆ Standardized the claims process.
 - ◆ Facilitate insurance innovation.

Cyrtodactylus vairengtensis

- It is a newly discovered species of gecko and named after the town Vairengte (in Mizoram), where it was discovered.
 - ⊖ The common name suggested is 'Vairengte bent-toed gecko'.
- Its distinct feature is number of femoral (precloacal) pores (9-11 in males and 5-9 in females).
 - ⊖ Femoral pores are located on the underside of hind legs in lizards that secrete a mixture of lipids and proteins and are thought to attract mates and mark territories.



Places in News



Tuvalu (Capital: Funafuti)

- Australia inked an agreement with Tuvalu to offer residency to its citizens displaced by climate change.
- Political features:
 - ⊖ It is a nation of nine coral islands and is not landlocked.
 - ⊖ Bordering nations: Kiribati and Nauru, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, Tokelau and Fiji, Samoa, Wallis and Futuna, and Tonga.
 - ⊖ Bordering water bodies: Located midway between Hawaii and Australia in South Pacific Ocean.
 - ⊖ It is believed to be first nation to face climate change-induced complete submersion.
- Geographical Features:
 - ⊖ Archipelago is volcanic in origin and includes both atolls and reef islands.
 - ⊖ Largest atoll: Funafuti

