

NEWS TODAY

HEATWAVE ALERT IN STATES, TEMPERATURE NEARS 45°C

- India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an **orange alert over high temperatures in 3 states** (West Bengal, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh) and claimed that **heatwave conditions are to prevail in 4 other states** (Sikkim, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh).
- Heatwave is a condition of air temperature which becomes fatal to human body when exposed.**
 - It is defined based on **temperature thresholds over a region in terms of actual temperature or its departure from normal.**
- Reasons for Heatwaves:** Prevalence of hot dry air over a region, Absence of moisture in upper atmosphere, Cloudless Sky, Anti-cyclonic conditions.
- IMD has given following criteria for Heatwaves**
 - Heatwave is considered if maximum temperature of a station reaches at least **40°C for Plains, and at least 30°C for Hilly regions.**
 - When **normal maximum temperature** of a station is **less than or equal to 40°C - Heatwave Departure from normal is 5°C to 6°C; Severe Heatwave Departure from normal is 7°C or more.**
 - When **normal maximum temperature** of a station is **more than 40°C - Heatwave Departure from normal is 4°C to 5°C; Severe Heatwave Departure from normal is 6°C or more.**
 - When **actual maximum temperature remains 45°C or more** irrespective of normal maximum temperature, heatwaves should be declared.

Different Heatwave Colour Alert		
Colour Codes	Alert	Warning
Green (No Action)	Normal Day	Max Temperatures are near normal
Yellow Alert (Be Updated)	Heat Alert	Heat wave conditions at isolated pockets persist for 2 days
Orange Alert (Be Prepared)	Severe Heat Alert	(i) Severe heat wave conditions for 2 days (ii) Though not severe, but heat waves for 4+ days
Red Alert (Take Action)	Extreme Heat Alert	(i) Severe heat wave for 2+ days. (ii) Total number of heat/severe heat waves for 6+ days

INDIA'S CLINICAL TRIALS REGISTRY

- Recently, **speedy approval of Covid-19 vaccines** raised several questions regarding the transparency of clinical trial.
- Clinical trials** are research studies performed in people that **evaluate medical, surgical, or behavioral intervention.**
 - They are governed by **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, Medical Council of India Act, 1956 and Central Council for Indian Medicine Act, 1970.**
- Clinical Trials Registry-India (CTRI)** is hosted with **Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) National Institute of Medical Statistics.**
 - Launched in 2007, it is a **free and online public record system** for registration of clinical trials conducted in India.
- Ethical implications of clinical trials**
 - Access to Treatment:** Clinical trials **mostly held by poor** often result in treatments that **they cannot afford.**
 - Conflicts of Interest:** **Organizers with financial interests** in their sponsoring companies may **compromise their professional judgment.**
 - Lack of informed consent by participants** due to literacy and deception by companies.
- Ways to improve clinical trials**
 - Permitting clinical trials post risk-benefit analysis** favoring participating patients.
 - Ethical committees should work with investigators** for potential harms and how they can be monitored as per the research proposals with minimum risk.
 - Mitigating the conflicts of interest** through full disclosures.

Fundamentals of conducting a clinical trial in India

Approval from Drugs Controller General India (DCGI)

Permission from particular Ethics Committee where clinical study is designed

Compulsory registration on ICMR website

CHHATTISGARH SEEKING INCLUSION OF HIGHER QUOTA BILLS IN NINTH SCHEDULE

- Chhattisgarh government has urged the Prime Minister to enlist the amended reservation provisions of the state, which **provides for 76% reservation in ninth schedule**.

- Ninth schedule contains a **list of central and state laws that cannot be challenged in court**.

➤ It was added by **First Constitutional Amendment Act of 1951 by inserting a new Article 31B**.

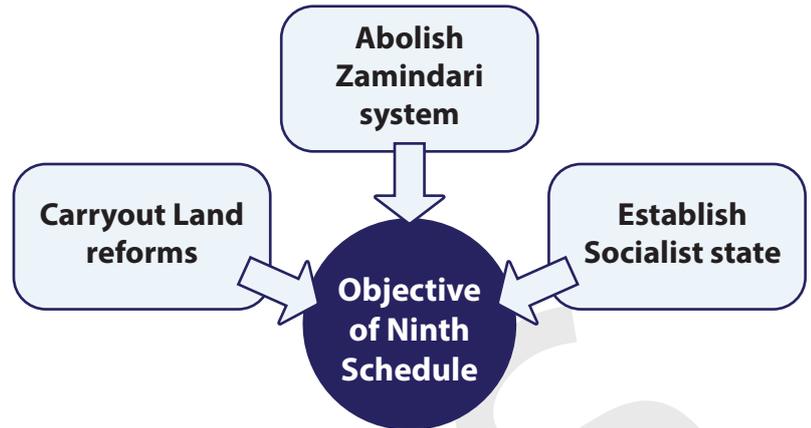
➤ Article 31B states that **none of the acts/regulations mentioned in Ninth Schedule shall be considered to be void on the ground that they are inconsistent with any rights**.

➤ **Article 31B is retrospective in nature** and currently, there are **284 acts/laws under schedule**, of which most are related to agriculture and land laws.

- **Ninth Schedule and its Judicial Scrutiny**

➤ **Waman Rao V Union of India, 1981**: SC held that amendment to Constitution which was **made before 24th April 1973** are valid (as per Kesavananda Bharati judgement and evolution of Basic Structure doctrine).

➤ **IR Coelho Vs State of Tamilnadu, 2007**: **Constitution bench of 9 Judges** declared that **Ninth schedule cannot be challenged on grounds of violation of fundamental rights**, but they **can be challenged on ground of violating basic structure of Constitution**.



WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION (WTO) PANEL RULES AGAINST INDIA IN IT TARIFFS DISPUTE

- WTO panel has observed that **India had violated global trading rules in an ongoing dispute with European Union (EU), Japan and Taiwan** over import duties on IT products such as mobile phones and components, as well as integrated circuits.

➤ Earlier, these countries have complained about the introduction of import duties for a wide range of IT products by India.

- **WTO Dispute Settlement System (DSS) came into force on 1 January 1995**. It was created by implying several modifications and improvements to **GATT 1947**.

- There are two main ways to settle a dispute once a complaint has been filed in WTO

➤ **Parties find a mutually agreed solution**, particularly during phase of bilateral consultations;

➤ **Through adjudication**, including **subsequent implementation of panel and Appellate Body reports**, which are binding upon parties once adopted by Dispute Settlement Body (DSB).

- **Three main stages to WTO dispute settlement process**

➤ **Consultations between the parties**.

➤ **Adjudication by panels** and, if applicable, by **Appellate Body**.

➤ **Implementation of ruling**, which includes possibility of countermeasures in the event of failure by losing party to implement the ruling.

Appellate Body is composed of **seven Members who are appointed by DSB to serve for four-year terms**, with possibility of being **reappointed once**.

G7 CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS' MEETING CONCLUDED IN SAPPORO, JAPAN

- **Key highlights**

➤ G7 countries set the urgent need to **reduce global GHG emissions by around 43 percent by 2030 and 60 percent by 2035**.

➤ They **targeted 2040 for reducing additional plastic pollution to zero**, bringing the target forward by a decade.

➤ G7 members pledged to **collectively increase offshore wind capacity by 150 gigawatts by 2030** and solar capacity to more than 1 terawatts.

➤ G7 will **accelerate the phase-out of unabated fossil fuels** so as to **achieve net zero in energy systems by 2050**.

- **About Group of Seven i.e., G7**

➤ It is an **informal forum of leading industrialised nations**, which dominate global trade, and the international financial system.

➤ It **meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security and energy policy**, besides a host of other issues topical to prevailing situation.

➤ **Members: United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan**.

▪ EU is not a member of G7 but attends annual summit.

➤ **46 percent of global GDP** is represented by G7 countries.

STEERING PANEL ON INDUS WATER TREATY (IWT) MEETS TO ASSESS MODIFICATION PROCESS

- India discussed **ongoing Neutral Expert proceedings pertaining to Kishenganga** (on Kishenganga River, tributary of Jhelum) and **Ratle Hydroelectric Projects** (on Chenab River) during sixth meeting of Steering Committee.
 - In January 2023, India issued the notice in view of **Pakistan's non-compliance in resolving disputes over these two hydropower projects** (both in Jammu and Kashmir).
- In 2015, **World Bank had appointed a "neutral expert" and a chairman of Court of Arbitration (CoA)** regarding establishment of Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric power plants on request of Pakistan.
 - India argued that **Pakistan's request for CoA violated graded mechanism of dispute resolution** in Treaty.
- Dispute redressal mechanism provided under Article IX of IWT** is a graded mechanism. It's a **3-level mechanism**. (refer image)
- IWT was signed in 1960**, between India and Pakistan and brokered **by World Bank**.
 - It **delimits the rights and obligations of both countries** concerning use of waters on Indus River System.
 - It allocates **Western Rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) to Pakistan and Eastern Rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) to India**. (refer map)
 - It **established a Permanent Indus Commission**, consisting of two commissioners (one from both countries) to promote cooperation.
 - Maximum area of Indus Basin is in Pakistan** followed by India, China and Afghanistan.



ALSO IN NEWS



Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) for Limited Purpose Clearing Corporation (LPCC)

- Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** released a circular announcing a DRM for LPCC.
- DRM will be used to **settle disputes between clearing members; contention between clearing members and their clients; differences between LPCC and its vendors; and disputes between clearing members or its clients and LPCC**.
 - Disputes between a clearing member and LPCC will be resolved through the process of **conciliation or by an arbitration panel**.
 - Ruling of arbitration panel would be considered **final and binding**.
- LPCC is an organization that has been created to **manage the process of clearing and settling repo transactions**.
- Clearing Member means a **member of Clearing Corporation who clears and settles deals through Clearing Corporation**.



Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM)

- IBM** has flagged the issue of illegal transportation of manganese ore leading to a massive loss of revenue in Odisha.
- IBM was set up in 1948 to promote systematic and scientific development of mineral resources** of the country both onshore and offshore.
 - It collects a **database of information on mines and minerals** in country to create a **National Mineral Information Repository**.
- Section 23 of Mines and Minerals Regulation and Development Act 1957 empowers state government** to make rules for preventing illegal mining, transportation and storage of mineral.
 - It is the **responsibility of State Governments to establish correct grade of mineral being dispatched** and change action premium, royalty and other payments on the correct grade of mineral.



Low Power Small Range FM Radio Broadcasting in India

- TRAI released a consultation paper** on issues related to Low Power Small Range FM Radio Broadcasting in India.
- Low-power short range FM radio broadcasting** is an effective method of sound broadcasting for services that are intended for limited locations and reception areas.
 - Examples**, Drive-in theatres, Hospital radio services, amusement parks, closed communities etc.
- Issues**: Requirement of **multiple licences to operate, high annual fee, lack of standard** and economical transmission equipment etc.
- Advantages**: **Reduces noise pollution, emergency broadcasting during disasters, Cost effective**, minimum infrastructure requirement etc.



Agniveer

- Indian Army conducting first online common entrance test for Agniveer recruitment.
- Agnipath Scheme is a recruitment scheme for Indian youth who wish to join Armed Forces. **Soldiers recruited under the scheme will be called Agniveers.**
 - Eligibility for recruitment as Agniveers is **17.5 to 21 years.**
 - On completion of service, Agniveers would receive **"Seva Nidhi" package (exempt from Income Tax) of ₹11.71 lakh.**



Exercise Orion

- It is a **multilateral exercise.** Besides **Indian Airforce and French Air and Space Force (FASF)**, Air Forces from **Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain and United States of America** would also be flying in this exercise.



Great Pacific Garbage Patch (GPGP)

- In a recent study, **Scientists have found that many coastal lifeforms have colonised plastic items in GPGP.**
- GPGP is a **collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean.**
 - Marine debris is litter that ends up in ocean, seas, and other large bodies of water.
 - Also known as **Pacific trash vortex**, the garbage patch is actually **two distinct collections of debris bounded by the massive North Pacific Subtropical Gyre.**
 - GPGP is estimated to be 1.6 mn sq.km big and at least 50 years old.



Toque Macaque

- Sri Lanka is planning to export **1 lakh toque macaques to China.**
- **About Toque Macaque**
 - It is a **reddish-brown-colored Old World monkey endemic to Sri Lanka.**
 - Most characteristic feature of this primate is the **toque-like swirl of hair on its head top.**
 - They are fitted with **exceptionally long, thin tails.**
 - They are **highly social animals**, living in units of up to 40 individuals.
 - **IUCN status:** Endangered.



Mangrove Pitta Birds (Pitta Megarhyncha)

- A first-ever census of **mangrove pitta birds was carried out in Odisha and around 179 birds were sighted.**
- **About Mangrove Pitta Birds**
 - They are **small secretive birds, measuring 17 to 19 cm in length and weighing 45 to 65 grams.**
 - This bird **usually feeds on insects and other small invertebrates.**
 - It is **found in eastern part of India** especially in **Odisha and West Bengal** along with countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore etc.
 - **IUCN:** Near Threatened.



Ahmadiyyas

- Radical Islamists in Pakistan demolished an over **100-year-old worship place of the minority Ahmadi community.**
- **About Ahmadiyyas**
 - Origins of religious sect are in **Qadian near Amritsar in Punjab, India.**
 - **Mirza Ghulam Ahmad** founded Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 1889 as a revival movement within Islam, emphasizing its **essential teachings of peace, love, justice, and sanctity of life.**
 - Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the **leading Islamic organization to categorically reject terrorism.**



Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats initiative (PRET)

- It is a **WHO initiative to improve the disease pandemic preparedness.**
- PRET **focuses on improving pandemic preparedness for groups of pathogens based on their modes of transmission.**
 - PRET operates under the **aegis of the International Health Regulations (IHR)**, which is a critical international legal instrument for managing public health emergencies.
 - PRET recognizes **three tiers of systems and capacities relevant for pandemic preparedness:**
 - those that are **cross-cutting for all or multi-hazard**, those that are **relevant for groups of pathogens**, and those that are **specific to a pathogen.**