

NEWS TODAY

INDIA SUPPORTS UNITED NATIONS (UN) EFFORTS TO CONTINUE KEY BLACK SEA GRAIN DEAL TERMINATED BY RUSSIA

- Black sea grain initiative was brokered by UN and Turkey in July 2022 between Russia and Ukraine.
 - It allows for commercial food and fertiliser (including ammonia) exports from three key Ukrainian ports in Black Sea – Odesa, Chornomorsk, and Pivdennyi/Yuzhny.
 - Joint Coordination Centre, including representatives from Russia, Türkiye, Ukraine and UN, was established to monitor its implementation.
- Significance of the deal
 - Check on rise of global food prices as both Ukraine and Russia are major global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other affordable food products.
 - Ensuring adequate availability of fertilizer at affordable prices.
 - Creating possibility of further negotiations between warring parties.
- Russia claims that promises made to it under the deal have not been met, and it is still facing trouble exporting its own agricultural products and fertilisers because of many sanctions placed on it.
 - End of the deal may result in hike in global food prices and an increase in global hunger and malnourishment.
- India is also facing the threat of imported inflation due to rise in prices of edible oils and foodgrains.
 - India imports around 70% of its sunflower oil from Ukraine.



UNION MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE LAUNCHED TECHNOLOGY BASED INITIATIVES FOR FARMERS

- Initiatives are launched under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) to empower farmers and streamlining the operations.
- New initiatives launched are

Weather Information Network Data Systems (WINDS) portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A centralized platform that hosts, manages, and processes hyper-local weather data collected by Automatic Weather Stations and Rain Gauges at Taluk/Block and Gram Panchayat levels. ● Enhances risk assessment and decision-making in crop insurance, agriculture advisories, and disaster mitigation.
Yield Estimation System, based on Technology (YES-TECH) Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A technology-driven yield estimation system, offering methodologies, best practices, and integration insights for accurate yield assessments at the Gram Panchayat level.
Door to Door enrollment app AIDE/Sahayak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● App ensures a seamless and transparent process, making crop insurance more accessible and convenient for farmers.

- Applications of technology in agriculture: crop and soil monitoring, predictive and agricultural analysis, real-time data analytics etc.
- Other initiatives taken
 - Forecasting Agricultural output using Space, Agro- meteorology and Land based observations (FASAL) project.
 - National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA) for timely access to agriculture related information through ICT use.
 - National Agricultural Drought Assessment and Monitoring System (NADAMS) for Agricultural drought assessment.
 - ISRO's Geo-platform, Bhuvan, provides data on plantation, pest surveillance and weather.
 - Promotion of Kisan Drones for crop assessment, digitization of land records etc.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE BACKS THE INTER-SERVICES ORGANISATIONS (COMMAND, CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE) (ISOs) BILL, 2023

• The ISOs Bill, tabled in Lok Sabha in March 2023, was referred to the Parliamentary Committee.

• Key highlights of the Bill

- Existing ISOs including the **Andaman and Nicobar Command, the Defence Space Agency, and the National Defence Academy** will be deemed to have been constituted under the Bill.
 - It also empowers the **Central Government to constitute an ISO.**
- It seeks to **empower the Commander-in-Chief or Officer-in-Command of ISOs to exercise disciplinary or administrative control** over the service personnel under their command, irrespective of their service.
 - Currently, **disciplinary powers** over service personnel can be exercised by the **officers of respective services** under the respective service acts, namely; **Army Act 1950, Navy Act 1957 and Air Force Act 1950.**
 - This directly **impacts command, control and discipline in ISOs** since the commanding officer of an ISO could not take any disciplinary action.
- The **superintendence** of an ISO will be vested in the **Central Government** and it may issue **directions to such ISOs** on grounds of **national security, general administration, or public interest.**

ISO means a body of troops including a **Joint Services Command** consisting of **persons from two or more services (Army, Navy and Airforce).**

REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON COASTAL AQUACULTURE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT BILL) 2023

• Bill was introduced by the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying** which seeks to amend **Coastal Aquaculture Authority (CAA) Act 2005.**

- **Bill** seeks to expand the scope of aquaculture, **decriminalise certain offences**, Promote **eco-friendly aquaculture practices** like cage culture, prevent the use of **antibiotics and pharmacologically active substances**, and add a new provision for **“biosecurity”.**

• Key issues

- **Intensive coastal aquaculture activities** may have adverse impacts on the environment as Act allows aquaculture activities to be undertaken in **Coastal Regulation Zones.**
- **Lack of content labelling on certain drugs/production boosters** is the major cause of concern.
 - **Export shipments** having residues of banned chemicals/drugs/anti-biotics are out rightly rejected by the importing countries.

• Key highlight of the Report

- **Accepted the proposed provision that Coastal Aquaculture and activities** connected therewith are permitted activities in CRZ and shall be treated as valid permission under CRZ Regulations.
- **Voluntary certification programme** for antibiotic-free Aquaculture Inputs should be made mandatory.
- Lower level of **non-monetary penalties** should be prescribed at the time of framing the Rules so as to protect the interests of **Traditional Fish Farmers.**

Coastal aquaculture is farming of **shrimp, prawn, fish or any other aquatic life in saline or brackish water.**

INDIA, SRI LANKA ADOPT VISION DOCUMENT TO EXPAND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

• India and Sri Lanka are celebrating the **75th year of their diplomatic relations.**

- Sri Lanka plays an essential role in **India’s ‘Neighbourhood First’ and ‘Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)’ policies.**

• Under the vision document named **‘Promoting Connectivity, Catalysing Prosperity: India-Sri Lanka Economic Partnership Vision’,** both countries have decided to strengthen relationships in five areas (refer table).



Maritime Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation in development of ports and logistics infrastructure at Colombo, Trincomalee and Kankesanthurai. • Resume passenger ferry services between Nagapattinam (India) and Kankesanthurai (Sri Lanka).
Air Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased frequency of flights between Chennai and Jaffna and explore connectivity to other destinations in Sri Lanka.
Energy and Power Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing renewable energy and exploring cooperation in Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia. • Expedite implementation of understanding on Sampur Solar Power Project and LNG infrastructure. • Develop Trincomalee as a national and regional hub of industry, energy and economic activity. • Construction of a multi-product petroleum pipeline and joint exploration and production of hydrocarbons in Sri Lanka’s offshore basins.
Trade, Economic and Financial Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalise UPI based digital payments in Sri Lanka. • Joint declaration of intent in the field of Animal husbandry and Dairying. • Facilitate investment in Sri Lanka and undertake discussions on Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement.
People-to-people Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popularize India and Sri Lanka’s Buddhist, Ramayana and other religious places for tourism. • To explore cooperation between educational institutions on both sides.

INDUSTRY LEADERS FORGE ALLIANCE FOR INCREASING DEMAND OF ELECTRIC FREIGHT VEHICLES

● Announcement was made **during NITI Aayog's e-FAST India** (Electric Freight Accelerator for Sustainable Transport – India) **related event** at 14th Clean Energy Ministerial.

- e-FAST India is **country's first electric freight platform**, spearheaded by NITI Aayog, **for transition towards cleaner freight transportation.**
- It **facilitates collaborations at both national and international levels**, supports **development of pilot programs**, and **explores technology integration** and associated research.

● **Importance of freight electrification for India**

- **Road freight** accounts for **about 71% of the overall freight movement.**
- **Freight sector** contributes to almost **14% of India's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.**
- Sector is also **heavily reliant on fossil fuel imports.**

● **Challenges in freight electrification**

- **Disaggregated nature of industry** as it primarily owned by individuals and small fleet owner-operators.
- **Lack of aggregated data** on freight movement.
- **Technological hurdles such as:** weight of battery required to support large payloads and long-distance travel, topography, climate, temperature also affect performance of electric vehicles

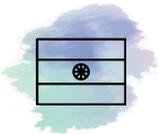
● **Initiatives taken**

- **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP)** envisaged electrification of light commercial vehicles (LCV).
- **FAME II subsidy scheme** provides incentives to electric LCV.
- **State level policies** such as Deliver Electric Delhi, Smart Waste Vijayawada etc.

ABOUT CLEAN ENERGY MINISTERIAL (CEM)

- It is a **high-level global forum (India is a member)** to promote policies and programmes **that advance clean energy technology** to encourage the transition to a global clean energy economy.

ALSO IN NEWS



National Flag

- **National Flag Adoption Day is celebrated on July 22**, to commemorate Constituent Assembly's adoption of Tricolour in 1947.
- Flag Code of India (FCI) 2002 **allows citizens to hoist Indian flag** over their homes, offices and factories on any day.
 - **Tricolour can be of nine standard dimensions** including 6300 x 4200, 900 x 600, etc. (all sizes in mm).
 - It **should be rectangular** in shape and **length-to-width ratio should always be 3:2.**
 - **Use of polyester, apart from cotton, wool, silk and khadi** is allowed for making hand-spun, hand-woven and machine -made flags.



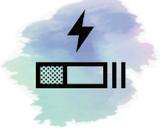
Logistics Data Bank(LDB) Project

- Department of Promotion of Industries and Internal Trade (DPIIT) **reviewed measures taken by Port Authorities to improve LDB.**
- LDB project aims **to make India's logistics sector more efficient** through use of Information Technology.
 - It is a **joint effort of India and Japan conceived** during planning of **Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project.**
 - It is implemented by **NICDC Logistics Data Services (NLDS), a joint venture between India and Japanese IT major NEC Corporation.**
- LDB handles **100% of India's EXIM container volume.**
- It was also **leveraged to develop Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP).**



Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

- 1309 Railway Stations have been identified under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme for their development.
- **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme**
 - The scheme was launched by the **Ministry of railways to modernize railway stations.**
 - It envisages **development of stations on a continuous basis** with a long-term approach.
 - It involves preparation of **Master Plans and their implementation in phases to improve the amenities at the stations.**
 - It aims to **create Roof Plazas and city centres at the station.**
 - It aims to **club different grades/types of waiting halls and provide good cafeteria/retail facilities.**

 <p>Electronic Cigarettes (e-cigarettes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health and Family welfare launched an online portal for reporting of violations under Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Act (PECA). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > All forms of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems including e-cigarettes are prohibited under PECA. E-cigarettes are battery-operated systems that heat a substance (liquid or solid), which contains nicotine and often flavours, to create an aerosol for inhalation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > E-cigarettes' aerosols have harmful substances such as nicotine, cancer-causing chemicals, heavy metals such as nickel, tin and lead, chemicals causing lung diseases such as diacetyl.
 <p>Degree Days (DD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree days are measures of how cold or warm a location is and is used to assess the energy needed to keep people comfortable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A DD compares the mean outdoor temperatures recorded for a location to a standard temperature. The more extreme the outside temperature, the higher the number of DD and the higher the requirement of energy for space heating or cooling. A Cooling DD quantifies the energy requirement for cooling while a Heating DD quantifies the energy requirement for heating.
 <p>Signages on Expressways and National Highways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) has issued new guidelines for the provision of signages on Expressways and National Highways for further improving road safety. Salient features of the guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Enhanced Visibility and Legibility through placement at appropriate height/ distance. > Pictorial Depictions along with text to convey essential messages. > Use of Regional Languages and English for multilingual approach on road signages. > Promoting better lane discipline through strategic positioning with clear and intuitive guidance to drivers > Phased Implementation
  <p>Personalities in news</p>	<p>Vyomesh Chandra Banerjee (1844-1906)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was one of the pioneer leaders of the nationalist movement. Contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > He became the first Indian to be appointed as a permanent lawyer. > In 1883, he defended Surendranath Banerjea in the famous Contempt of Court Case in the Calcutta High Court. > He presided over the first session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay in 1885 (A moderate in politics). <p>Jairamdas Daulatram (1891-1979)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was freedom fighter and a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Participated in Quit India Movement, along with Home Rule Movement . > Later served as a Governor of Bihar and Assam after India's Independence. > He was one of the founding members of the All India Sindhi Language and Literature Congress.
 <p>Places in news</p>	<p>Democratic Republic of Congo (Capital: Kinshasa)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recent spike in cholera cases raised concerns. Political Boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Located in Central Africa, it is the largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa and second largest (after Algeria) in the African Continent. > Bordered by Central African Republic, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Congo. Geographical Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Major Rivers: Congo, Lukuga > Lakes: Albert, Edward, Kivu, Tanganyika and Mweru > Highest Peak: Margherita Peak on Mount Stanley 