

# NEWS TODAY

## MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS LAUNCHED BHARAT NCAP (NEW CAR ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME)

● Bharat NCAP is a **new car safety assessment programme** which **proposes a mechanism of awarding 'Star Ratings'** to automobiles based upon their performance in crash tests.

➤ It will be **implemented from 31st October 2023**. It is modeled on **Global NCAP**.

### ● Key features

➤ **Applicable to vehicles of category M1 with gross vehicle weight less than or equal to 3.5 tonnes**, manufactured or imported in country.

- M1 is motor vehicles used for **carriage of passengers, comprising eight seats, in addition to driver's seat**.

➤ Car manufacturers can voluntarily offer their **cars tested as per Automotive Industry Standard (AIS) 197**.

➤ **Safety is assessed on three primary pillars** i.e., **Adult Occupant Safety, Child Occupant Safety, and fitment of safety assist technology** like electronic stability, anti-lock braking systems, seat belt reminders, airbags, etc.

➤ Cars will be awarded star ratings (**one to five stars**) for **Adult and Child safety**.

➤ **Voluntary in nature except in certain cases** such as base variant of a popular vehicle model (minimum clocked sale of 30,000 units) or when Ministry recommends a model for testing.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF BHARAT NCAP

- **Create ecosystem of competitive safety enhancements** leading to **increased awareness among consumers**.

- **Prevent road accidents** (target to **reduce 50 percent accident deaths by 2024**).

- **Increasing the export potential** of car manufacturers in India.

## COMMITTEE ON STALLED HOUSING PROJECTS SUBMITS REPORT TO MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS (MoHUA)

● Committee was formed by the ministry following a recommendation made by the **Central Advisory Council (CAC)**.

➤ **CAC constituted under RERA 2016 is chaired by Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs**.

### ● Key highlight

➤ **Around 4.12 lakh housing units** (44% in NCR) worth **4.08 lakh crores are stalled**.

➤ **Lack of financial viability** (leading to cost overruns and delays) is the main reason for stalled projects.

➤ **Finding a resolution** will add **more housing units and impetus to economic growth**.

### ● Recommendations

➤ **Mandatory registration with RERA:** To enhance **developers' accountability** for their actions and the commitments made to homebuyers.

➤ **Rehabilitation Package:** By **States Governments** to make stalled projects financially viable.

➤ **Financing of Stalled Projects:** Treat it as a priority and utilise **Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Fund**.

➤ **Resolution of stalled projects:**

- All stakeholders (developers, financiers, land authorities, etc.) would have to **take a "haircut"** (accept less than what is due to them).
- **Improve the Internal Rate of Return** of the projects in order to attract funding.
- **Judicial interventions**, like the use of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, should be **"the last resort"**.

### RERA (REAL ESTATE (REGULATION AND DEVELOPMENT) ACT 2016)

- It was enacted to provide **safeguards against delays and fraudulent practices** by **unscrupulous builders**

- It mandates that **all projects where the land is over 500 square metres or the number of apartments** to be constructed is more than eight **are registered with the respective state RERA**.

➤ Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) performs **administrative, quasi-judicial, penal, regulatory and compliance functions** to regulate real estate projects.

## JAPAN TO RELEASE WATER FROM FUKUSHIMA NUCLEAR PLANT INTO OCEAN

- The **1.34 million tonnes of treated radioactive water** from 2011 **earthquake and tsunami-hit Fukushima nuclear plant** is to be **released into the Pacific Ocean** after 12 years.
  - As per International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), discharges of the treated water would have a negligible radiological impact to people and the environment.
  - **Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)**, nuclear plant's operator, has been **designated to execute the plan**.
  - Fukushima plant is **located on the country's east coast**, about 220 kilometres north-east of capital Tokyo.
- Japan claims to have used **"Advanced Liquid Processing System" (ALPS)** to treat the water stored.
  - ALPS is a **pumping and filtration system which removes most of the radioactive materials** from water **except tritium** - radioactive isotope of hydrogen - which is **difficult to separate from water**.
- **Concerns associated with release of water**
  - Tritiated water can **damage DNA if ingested**.
  - Exposure to radioactive materials can health problems like **leukemia, anemia, hemorrhage etc. and destroy nutrients in soil**
  - Release of wastewater **could pollute the ocean, and drive up prices of salt and seafood**.
    - **China banned seafood imports** from Japan including Fukushima and Tokyo.

### ABOUT IAEA

- IAEA, established in 1957, is an **intergovernmental organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy** and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.

## INDIAN OCEAN DIPOLE (IOD) TURNS POSITIVE

- IOD (aka Indian Nino) is defined by the **difference in sea surface temperature** between eastern and western sides of Indian Ocean.

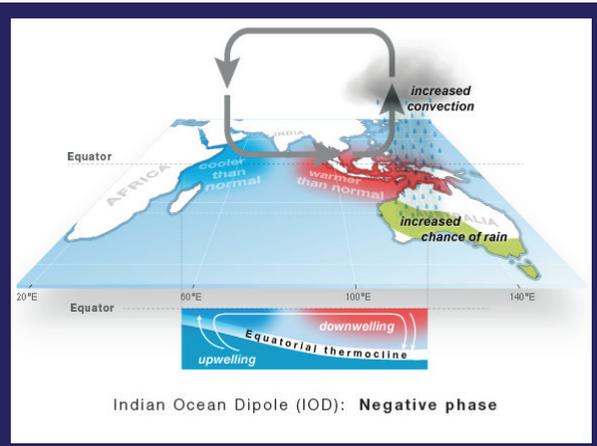
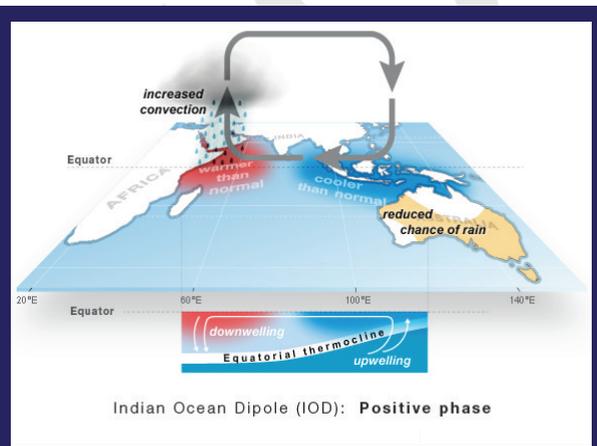
### IOD has three phases:

- **Positive IOD** when the **western side of Indian Ocean**, near the Somalia coast, **becomes warmer** than the eastern Indian Ocean.
  - Positive IOD **helps rainfall along Indian subcontinent and African coast** while **suppressing rainfall over Indonesia, Southeast Asia and Australia**.
- **Negative IOD** in case of **cooler western part and warmer eastern part**. It results in greater precipitation in Australia and drier conditions in East Africa.
- **Neutral IOD** when **temperatures are close to normal** across the Indian Ocean.

- IOD has a **link with El Nino Southern Oscillations (ENSO)** through an **extension of the Walker Circulation (air flow in equatorial Pacific)** to the west and associated warm water flow from Pacific to Indian Ocean.

- Positive IOD event is **often** associated with **El Nino** (abnormal warming of equatorial Pacific Ocean) while a **negative IOD** is associated with **La Nina** (abnormal cooling).

- Compared to ENSO events, the impacts of IODs are much weaker.



## BANKING SYSTEM FACING LIQUIDITY DEFICIT OF ₹23,644.43 CRORE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FY24: RBI DATA

- **Liquidity in banking system** refers to readily **available cash to meet short-term business and financial needs** of banks.
  - RBI controls **liquidity** in banking system through **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF)**.
    - LAF is operated through **Repo auctions** (for absorption of liquidity) and **Reverse Repo auctions** (for injection of liquidity).
- Banking system **liquidity deficit** means banks do not have sufficient funds for the **credit demands coming in from the customers**.
  - Thus, there will be pressure on banks to **raise more deposits** leading to **higher interest rates**.
  - It may force people to resort to other modes to fulfil their credit demand.
- **Key reasons for current liquidity deficit**
  - **Implementation of Incremental Cash Reserve Ratio (ICRR):** To absorb surplus liquidity, RBI mandated banks to set aside an additional 10% net demand and time liabilities of May 19- July 28.
  - **Payments of advance tax and GST by businesses:** Resulted in shift of liquidity away from banking sector
  - **Increase in credit** demand due to festive season.
  - **Selling of dollars** by RBI lead to absorption of liquidity.
- **RBI's instruments for liquidity infusion:** Marginal Standing Facility, Variable Rate Repo auction, **Statutory Liquidity ratio**, etc.

# NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (NTCA) ACCORDS FINAL APPROVAL TO DHOLPUR-KARALI TIGER RESERVE (DKTR)

- Now, after being notified by the State government DKTR will become the **54<sup>th</sup> Tiger Reserve (TR) of India** and 5<sup>th</sup> of Rajasthan.
  - **Ranthambore, Sariska, Mukundra Hills and Ramgarh Vishdhari** are the remaining four TRs in Rajasthan.
  - TRs are **notified by State Governments** on the **advice of NTCA** under **Section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) or WPA Act, 1972.**
- TR, considered as **critical for tiger conservation**, consists of **two parts**:
  - **Core or critical tiger habitat:** National Park or Sanctuary status
  - **Buffer or peripheral area:** A lesser degree of habitat protection is required
- **Key initiatives to protect tiger**
  - **Project Tiger** launched in 1973 is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of MoEFCC.**
  - **Tiger Conservation Plan and Tiger Conservation Foundation** to be prepared by the state government under WPA for **tiger reserve management.**
  - **TRAFFIC** to facilitate improvements in India's **anti-poaching efforts.**
  - **Leveraging technology**
    - **M-STRIPES** (Monitoring System for Tigers Intensive-Protection & Ecological Status): An android app for monitoring.
    - **Project 'E-Bird Technology for Tiger Conservation'**: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles as a Surveillance and Monitoring tool.
    - **Conservation Genetics:** Used in low **tiger density areas to detect tiger presence.**



## National Tiger Conservation Authority



**Genesis:** Constituted in 2006 under **WPA, 1972**, amended in 2006.



**Nodal Ministry:** **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).**



**Chairperson:** Minister in charge of MoEFCC.



### Functions:

- Conducts **All India Tiger Estimation.**
- Creates **Annual Plan** of Operations of TR.
- Lay down **normative standards for tourism activities.**
- Provide for **measures for addressing conflicts of men and wild animal.**

## ALSO IN NEWS



- AU has suspended Niger from all its activities due to a military coup.



## African Union



**About:** **AU** is a continental body consisting of the **55 member states (including Niger).**



**Genesis:** Established in 2002 as a successor to the **Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999).**



**Vision/Objective:** Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens.



**India's cooperation project in AU:** Pan-African e-Network Project, Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, etc.



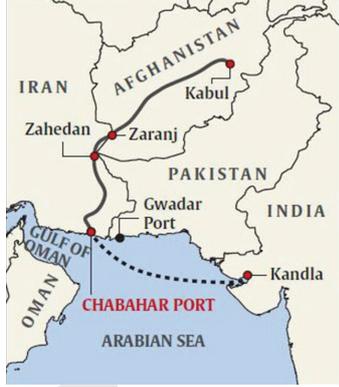
## Ultra-processed food

- WHO study found a **rapid rise of UPF sale in India in 10 yrs.**
- UPFs are a **category of food products that have undergone extensive processing** and contain a **significant amount of additives** (preservatives, artificial flavours, colours, etc.)
  - **Ex. Snacks, sodas, fast food items.**
- **Effects of high intake of UPFs:** Leads to obesity, digestive problems, inhibits type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular issues etc.
- **Initiatives:** FSSAI has formed a **committee to review and highlight new challenges in the area of nutraceuticals and UPF.**



## India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)

- IPPB was established in 2018 under **Ministry of Communication** to use the vast network of **India**
- **Post as Payment bank** to enhance penetration of **banking services.**
  - **Payments Bank** can carry out **most banking operations** but **can't advance loans** or issue credit cards.
- **Government of India** owns **100% equity in IPPB.**

 <p><b>Chabahar Port</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is reported that India and Iran have <b>agreed not to seek commercial foreign arbitration for disputes between users and operators at Chabahar Port.</b></li> <li>Chabahar is <b>India's first foreign port project.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is located in <b>Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province</b> on Gulf of Oman.</li> <li>It has <b>two ports -- Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti.</b></li> <li>It is considered as a <b>gateway</b> that would enable India to <b>bypass Pakistan and access Afghanistan</b>, and ultimately Central Asia.</li> <li>With its <b>strategic location near Strait of Hormuz and Indian Ocean</b>, port offers significant potential.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 
 <p><b>Terms in news</b></p>	<p><b>Eco-anxiety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Eco-anxiety</b> is defined as an <b>overwhelming sense of fear, sadness, and dread</b> due to warming of the planet.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It may cause <b>post-traumatic stress disorder, suicides due to economic fallouts</b> (for instance due to flood), heat induced aggression, or nagging stress.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Climate doom-ism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Climate doom-ism is a belief that humanity has lost the battle against climate change</b> and mankind is on its way to <b>extinction.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is based on the idea that <b>humanity has passed the point of being able to do anything at all about global warming.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <p><b>Mental Health Action Plan for WHO South-East Asia (SEA) Region 2023–2030</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan has been launched to promote <b>mental well-being, prevent mental disorders</b>, in SEA Region.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earlier, member States of the WHO SEA Region adopted the <b>2022 Paro Declaration on Universal access to people-centred mental health care and services.</b></li> <li><b>Paro Declaration</b> calls for <b>increased funding for community-based mental health networks</b> and continuous supply of medicines and rehabilitation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>WHO World Mental Health Report 2022 estimates <b>nearly 1 billion people living with a mental disorder</b> globally.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Methylovium buryatense 5GB1C</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methylovium buryatense 5GB1C is a <b>methanotroph (methane-eating microorganism) bacterial strain.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It can potentially <b>remove methane from major emission sites</b> like landfills, paddy fields, and oil and gas wells.</li> <li>Harnessing this bacteria on a large scale can <b>keep 240 million tonnes of methane from reaching the atmosphere by 2050.</b></li> <li>Bacteria <b>produce biomass</b> after consuming methane, which can be used as feed in aquaculture.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Methane</b> is over <b>85 times more potent than carbon dioxide</b> on a 20-year timescale and responsible for nearly <b>30% of total global warming.</b></li> </ul>
 <p><b>Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US Food and Drug Administration approved the <b>first vaccine "Abrysvo (RSV Vaccine)"</b> that protects new-borns.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vaccine is <b>given to pregnant mothers during latter stages</b> of their pregnancies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>RSV is a <b>highly contagious virus that causes respiratory infections</b> in individuals of all age groups <b>especially infants and elderly.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the <b>most frequent cause of Lower Respiratory Tract Diseases in infants</b> worldwide.</li> <li>RSV <b>vaccine is also available for people at 60 and older.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <p><b>SeamlessM4T AI model</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meta, Facebook parent company, has launched <b>AI model named Seamless4T.</b></li> <li>This AI model <b>can perform speech-to-text, text-to-speech, speech-to-speech, text-to-text translation</b> for nearly 100 languages.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is considered as an <b>improvement over "No Language Left Behind"</b>, a text-to-text machine translation AI model that supports over 200 languages.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>