NEWS TODAY

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI) TO WITHDRAW RS 2,000 NOTES FROM CIRCULATION

- RBI has decided to withdraw Rs 2000 denomination banknotes from circulation. But **existing notes will continue to be legal tender.**

  - **Existing Rs 2,000 notes can be deposited or exchanged up to a limit of ₹ 20,000 at a time at any bank until 30th September 2023. Non-account holder can also exchange** at any bank branch.

  - Deposit into bank accounts can be made **without restrictions subject to compliance with existing Know Your Customer (KYC) norms** and other applicable statutory and/or regulatory requirements.

- **Reasons for withdrawal**

  - Rs 2000 note was **introduced in 2016 under Section 24(1) of RBI Act, 1934** to meet **currency requirement** of economy expeditiously after demonetisation of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes.

    - Once notes of other denominations were available in adequate quantities, **printing of Rs 2000 notes was stopped in 2018-19.**

  - This denomination is **no longer commonly used for transactions.**

  - **Withdrawal is part of RBI's "Clean Note Policy",** currency management operations of RBI.

- Clean Note Policy, introduced in 1999, seeks to **provide public good-quality currency notes and coins with better security features,** while soiled notes are withdrawn out of circulation.

LEGAL TENDER (LT)

- It refers to a specific **subset of currency** that holds **legal recognition as a legitimate payment method.**

- It can be **limited or unlimited in character.** In India, **coins function as limited LT whereas Currency notes are unlimited LT.**

GOVERNMENT PANEL RECOMMENDS UNIFIED ACCREDITATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES (HEIs) INCLUDING INDIAN INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY (IITs)

- Report titled **'Transformative Reforms for Strengthening Periodic Assessment and Accreditation of All Higher Educational Institutions in India'** proposed that **HEIs be brought under ambit of umbrella accreditation and assessment system,** proposed in National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, by 2023 end.

  - NEP 2020 envisages a completely **new system of accreditation through National Accreditation Council (NAC).**

  - NAC will come **under proposed Higher Education Council of India (HECI),** and it'll be responsible for overseeing and supervising an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions.

- Currently, **there are multiple agencies for accreditation of institutions** e.g., National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), National Board of Accreditation (NBA) among others.

- **Key recommendations**

  - Amalgamate **Programme-Accreditation and Institution Accreditation,** considering their inter-dependency; and evolve a **Composite Assessment System.**

  - Transition from current eight-point grading system of NAAC to an adapted **Binary accreditation system viz. Accredited or Not Accredited** (for those who are far below the standards for accreditation), **Awaiting Accreditation** (institutes who are **close to threshold level or accreditation).**

  - Instead of present one-size-fits-all model, it suggests six categories of HEIs based on their orientation/vision

    - Multi-disciplinary Education and Research-Intensive; Research-Intensive; Teaching-Intensive; Specialised Streams; Vocational and Skill-Intensive; Community Engagement & Service Heritage.

RELATED NEWS

- Center for World University Rankings (CWUR) released **'Global 2000' 2023 report** which rank over **2000 universities across the world.**

- Its **findings are based on four factors:** Quality of education (25%), employability (25%), quality of faculty (10%), and research performance (40%).

- **India's performance**

  - **64 Indian universities** feature on the list.

  - **Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (IIM-A) has emerged as the best Indian institute** at 419th position.

  - Not a single Indian university is among the **top 10 in Asia.**

WORLD BANK RELEASED REPORT TITLED 'THRIVING: MAKING CITIES GREEN, RESILIENT, AND INCLUSIVE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE'

- Report highlighted the **role of cities in addressing global climate challenge.**
- **Key Highlights**
  - Number of people living in cities **increased from 1.19 billion to 4.46 billion between 1970 and 2022.**
  - Cities are responsible for **approximately 70 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.**
  - On per capita basis, **cities in high and upper-middle-income countries have highest fossil carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions** and those in low-income countries have **the lowest.**
    - North American cities are the **largest per capita emitters,** while cities in Sub-Saharan Africa remain **lowest per capita emitters** on average.
    - Cities in lower-income countries account for **only 14 percent of global urban CO2 emissions.**
- **Challenges in making cities green:** Increasing frequency of **extreme heat and dry events;** Global sea-level rise increasing **risk of flooding** for coastal cities; Fragmented, disconnected and dispersed patterns of urbanisation etc.
- **Recommendations**
  - Adopt **integrated green urban planning strategies** that address interconnected challenges, including investment in **green space and sustainable infrastructure.**
  - Enhancing agricultural productivity and reducing food loss and waste can **offset the impacts of horizontal urban expansion.**

QUAD LEADERS' HIROSHIMA MEET FOCUSES ON OPEN RADIO ACCESS NETWORK (RAN) SECURITY

- Quad leaders at their summit in Hiroshima have made a significant announcement to **strengthen security architecture for Open RAN** beginning with Palau (country in western Pacific Ocean) in Pacific Region.

BENEFITS OF OPEN RAN

- Intelligent and programmable networks
- Data center economics to radio network
- Lower total cost of ownership (TCO)
- OPEN RAN
- Vendor diversity
- Automation and manageability
- Agility of innovation
- Faster time to market

  - This initiative will **modernize Palau's national mobile network,** establish an **Open RAN deployment in partnership** with local stakeholders, and support its sustainable operation.
  - Also, **'Open RAN Security Report'** outlines cybersecurity considerations associated with using Open RAN as an approach to developing network architecture.
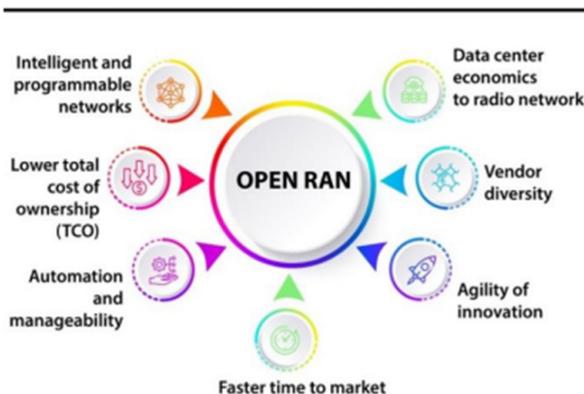- RAN **provides the critical technology to connect users to mobile network** over radio waves. It also **acts as a bridge** to access all key applications on web.
  - Current RAN technology is provided as **an integrated platform of both hardware and software.** Therefore, it is **difficult to mix vendors for its different units.**
- Idea of **Open RAN is to enable operators to mix and match components** from different vendors.
  - Open RAN **will create a multi-supplier RAN solution** that allows for the separation between hardware and software with open interfaces.

'DECENTRALISED RENEWABLE ENERGY (DRE) TECHNOLOGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS' REPORT RELEASED

- Report was published jointly by Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and Villgro Innovations Foundation's.
- **Key highlights**
  - Currently, India has **12 mature technologies powered by DRE** such as higher capacity irrigation pumps as well as micro pumps, silk reeling machines, dryers, charkhas, etc.
  - These DRE technologies can **impact 37 million livelihoods in India's agriculture and textile sectors.**
  - **DRE livelihood technologies have greatest impact opportunity in Uttar Pradesh,** followed by West Bengal.
- DRE is a system that **uses renewable energy** to generate, store and distribute **power in a localised way.** DRE technologies have a **market potential worth Rs 4 lakh crore in India.**
- **Need to promote DRE**
  - Energy-efficient technologies powered by decentralised renewables can **enhance incomes and resilience of India's more than 60 million microenterprises while fostering climate action.**
  - **Reduce reliance of livelihood on diesel,** particularly in rural settings, and can **supplement grid supply.**
  - DRE livelihood applications would help in **achieving self-reliant India.**
- **Challenges:** Lack of direct contact with manufacturers to address technology defects, Capital intensive in nature thus financing for end-users and enterprises would be critical etc.

> **Way forward: Reduce technical and legal difficulties** associated with feeding electricity to grid; **Focus on capacity building** to create a skilled labour force etc.

TELANGANA- ANDHRA PRADESH (AP) WATER DISPUTE

- Water-sharing disputes **regarding sharing of Krishna basin water** between both states **have been unresolved** even **nine years** after the bifurcation of combined State in 2014.
- In 1969, **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-I** (KWDT) was set up under Inter-State River Water Dispute Act, 1956.
  - ➤ It divided **2060 TMC (Thousand Million Cubic feet) of Krishna water** at **75 percent dependability** into three parts: 560 TMC for **Maharashtra,** 700 TMC for **Karnataka** and 800 TMC for **AP.**
  - ➤ **KWDT-II, instituted in 2004,** made allocations of Krishna water at **65 percent dependability and for surplus flows as follows:** 81 TMC for Maharashtra, 177 TMC for Karnataka, and 190 TMC for AP.
  - ➤ After creation of Telangana as a separate state in 2014, **AP is asking to include Telangana as a separate party at KWDT** and that allocation of Krishna waters be reworked among four states, instead of three.
- **Constitutional provisions relating to Water**
  - ➤ **State list:** Entry 17 (Water supplies, irrigation and canals, drainage etc.).
  - ➤ **Union list:** Entry 56 (Regulation and development of inter-State rivers and river valleys)
  - ➤ **Article 262: Adjudication of disputes relating to waters** of inter-State rivers.
    - ■ In exercise of power conferred by Article 262, Parliament enacted **Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956.**

> - Krishna is an **east-flowing river that originates at Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra** and **merges with Bay of Bengal,** flowing through Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

ALSO IN NEWS

One-stop Centres for Zero Waste	• Government will **launch one-stop centres called Reduce, Recycle and Reuse which will serve as one-stop solution for citizens, commercial enterprises,** etc. to deposit unused or used plastic items, clothes, shoes, footwear, books, and toys.
	  ➤ Items will then be given to different stakeholders to be refurbished for reuse or would be made into new products **contributing to a circular economy,**
	  ➤ These 'RRR' centres would be **set up as part of a nationwide campaign 'Meri LiFE, Mera Swachh Shehar' ('My Life, My Clean City')** under aegis of Swacch Bharat Mission – Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0).

People's Biodiversity Register (PBR)	• **National Campaign for updation and verification of PBR was launched in Goa.**
	• PBR serves as a **record of biodiversity,** i.e., conservation of habitats, domesticated stocks and breeds of animals, micro-organisms, and knowledge of the area's diversity.
	  ➤ As per Biological Diversity Act 2002, **Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) are** created for "promoting conservation, sustainable use and documentation of biological diversity" by local bodies.
	  ➤ **BMCs have been entrusted with preparation of PBRs,** in consultation with local communities.

Green shipping	• Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) made **announcements focusing green shipping and digitisation of ports:**
	  ➤ **30% financial support** for promotion of Green Shipping;
	  ➤ **Single Window Portal** to facilitate and monitor river and sea cruise;
	  ➤ **Some ports will be developed as Green Hydrogen Hub** and as smart port.
	• **About Green shipping:**
	  ➤ Concerned about **reduction in use of resources and energy** to transport people and goods by ship.
	  ➤ It aims to preserve global environment from GHGs and environmental pollutants generated by ships.

Orang National Park and Tiger Reserve (TR)	• Rhino died due to infighting in Orang National Park and TR.
	• It is located on **north bank** of **Brahmaputra River** in **Darrang** and **Sonitpur** districts of Assam.
	  ➤ Tributaries Dhansiri and Pachnoi divide the park into two halves.
	  ➤ It was established as wildlife sanctuary in 1985 but **declared as National Park in 1999.** It was notified as 49th TR of the country in 2016.
	  ➤ Also known as **mini Kaziranga,** inhabited by **one-horned rhinoceros.**
	  ➤ **Fauna:** Pigmy hog, Tiger, Elephants, Hog Deer, Wild Pig, Civet Cat etc.

Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (PWS)	• Supreme Court has asked the Centre and Assam government to respond to a plea seeking directions to declare the area around PWS an eco-sensitive zone. • It is **situated in Assam and its boundary is made by Garanga Beel on south and river Brahmaputra on North.** ➤ It was established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1987. ➤ Fauna: Leopard, Asiatic Water buffalo, Jungle Cats, Flying fox, Wild boar, Fishing cat, Short nosed fruit bat.
Mount Etna	• Italy's Mount Etna volcano has erupted. • Mount Etna is the **highest Mediterranean island mountain** and the **most active stratovolcano** in world. ➤It is the **tallest active volcano in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.** ➤**It is located on the island of Sicily, Italy.** ➤It lies above the **convergent plate margin between African Plate and Eurasian Plate.**
e-cigarettes	• Union Health Ministry issued a **public notice for stricter implementation of 'The Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019'.** ➤Act prohibits production, manufacturing, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of e-cigarettes. • **About Electronic Cigarette or e-Cigarette:** ➤It **refers to an electronic device** that heats a substance, **with or without nicotine and flavours,** to create an aerosol for inhalation. ➤It **includes all forms of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems,** Heat Not Burn Products, e-Hookah and the like devices.
Hooch (alcoholic liquor especially when illicitly made or obtained)	• Over 50 people have died in a series of **hooch tragedies in Bihar.** • **How hooch is different from regular alcohol?** ➤ Key ingredient of an alcoholic beverage should be **ethyl alcohol (ethanol),** but **hooch** usually contains **methyl alcohol (methanol)** in its place. ➤ Both methanol and ethanol are **colourless liquids,** similar in taste and smell. ➤Human body breaks down both ethanol and methanol into compounds that can be **harmful to health (refer infographic).** The body metabolises alcohol in a two-step process. For ethanol, a harmful product at step 1 is removed in step 2: for methanol, products at both stages are highly toxic **STAGE 1** (Enzyme in action: **ADH**) **ETHANOL** is converted into **ACETALDEHYDE** — **ETHANOL** is converted into **FORMALDEHYDE** EFFECT **ACETALDEHYDE** can cause headaches and nausea, and possibly cancer in the long term — **FORMALDEHYDE** corrodes the stomach; it can cause ulceration and diaorrhea **STAGE 2** (Enzyme in action: **ALDH**) **ACETALDEHYDE** is converted into **ACETIC ACID** — **FORMALDEHYDE** is converted into **FORMIC ACID** EFFECT **ACETIC ACID** is not considered toxic if consumed at low levels — **FORMIC ACID** can damage the optic nerve, leading to blindness
Places in News	**Somalia (Capital: Mogadishu)** • **Around 200,000 people have been displaced due to flash flooding** in Shabelle River. • **Political Boundaries** ➤**Location: Easternmost country** on mainland Africa situated on peninsula known as **Horn of Africa.** ➤**Borders:** Bordered by **Ethiopia, Djibouti, Gulf of Aden, Kenya, and Indian Ocean.** ➤Also Shares maritime borders with **Yemen.** ➤**Equator passes** through Somalia. • **Geographical features** ➤**Terrain:** Mostly flat savanna and semidesert, to undulating plateau rising to hills in north. ➤**Major Rivers:** Shebelle and Jubba. ➤**Highest Point:** Mount Shimbiris, also known as Mount Surud Cad.