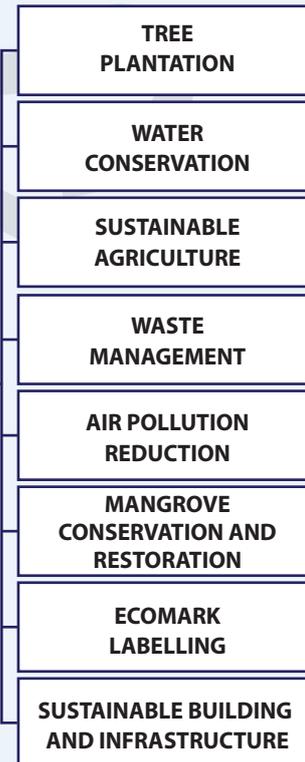


NEWS TODAY

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (MOEF&CC) NOTIFIES DRAFT GREEN CREDIT PROGRAMME (GCP) IMPLEMENTATION RULES 2023

- MoEF&CC has decided to institute GCP under **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** and issued these draft rules.
- Draft GCP Implementation Rules 2023**
 - Green Credit (GC) means a **singular unit of an incentive** provided for a specified activity, delivering a **positive impact on the environment**.
 - Objectives of GCP:**
 - Create a **market based mechanism for providing GCs** to individuals, organizations, local bodies, gram panchayats, private sectors etc. for environment positive actions.
 - Create **mass movement around environment positive actions** and realize the vision of **Mission LiFE**.
 - GCs will be **tradable outcomes** and will be made available for **trading on a domestic market platform**.
 - An activity generating GCs **may also get Carbon Credits** from the same activity under the carbon market.
 - The **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education** is the administrator of the GCP, responsible for its implementation, management and monitoring.
- GCP was announced during the Union Budget 2023**, aligning with India's climate goals under Paris Agreement and realizing the vision of "Mission LiFE".
 - GCP aims to leverage a **competitive market-based approach for Green Credits** thereby incentivising voluntary environmental actions of various stakeholders.
 - Article 6 of Paris Agreement** allows for carbon trading through market mechanisms.

STRUCTURE FOR GCP

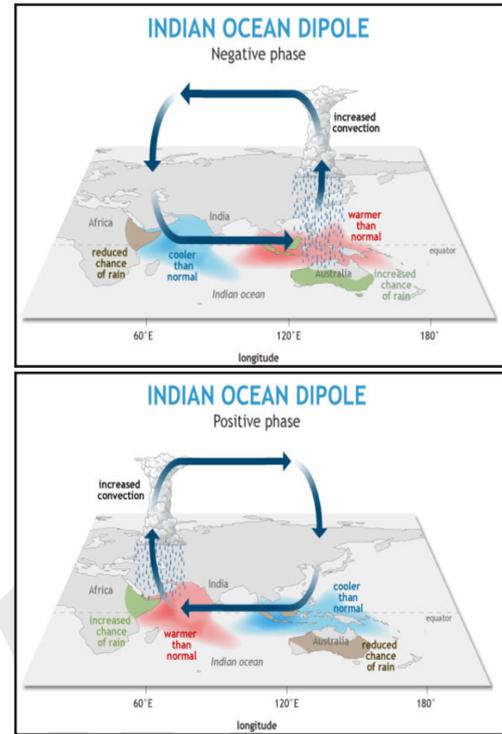


64TH GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF) COUNCIL MEETING IN BRAZIL

- The GEF Council approved the disbursement of **\$1.4 billion** to accelerate efforts to **tackle the climate, biodiversity, and pollution crises**.
 - The funding package includes **support for 136 countries** and will enable them to advance most of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
 - The Framework was adopted at **Convention on Biological Diversity COP15** in 2022.
- About GEF**
 - GEF is a **multi stakeholder partnership** to tackle various environmental issues established during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit of UNFCCC.
 - GEF funding is provided by **participating donor countries** and is **mobilized through a replenishment process every four years**.
 - It serves as "**financial mechanism**" to **five conventions**
 - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
 - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.
 - Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**.
 - UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**.
 - Minamata Convention on Mercury**.
 - Structure of GCF:**
 - The GEF **Assembly** is composed of **all 185 member countries**, or participants including **India**.
 - The **GEF Council is the main governing body**, with 32 members appointed by constituencies of GEF member countries.
 - The **GEF Secretariat** is based in Washington, D.C.

INDIAN OCEAN DIPOLE (IOD) AND EL-NINO

- While the El Nino is already firmly **established in the Pacific Ocean** this year, a **positive IOD development** is also being forecasted by different meteorological agencies.
- **IOD** is defined by the difference in sea surface temperature between the eastern and western sides of the Indian Ocean.
- **Relation between El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and IOD**
 - The air circulation in the Indian Ocean **is from west to east, and in opposite directions at the upper level.**
 - In a normal year warm water from the **west Pacific cross over to the Indian Ocean** and make the air rise and strengthening the air circulation.
 - During EL nino, the western side of the Pacific is cooler than normal because of which the Indian Ocean side also gets cooler and helps **in the development of positive IOD.**
 - Similarly negative **IOD is associated with LA-Nina.**
 - Researchers believe that while external factors such as ENSO can trigger IOD, **many times is caused by the local circulations.**
- A positive IOD helps **rainfall along the African coast, and Indian subcontinent** while suppressing it in the eastern Indian Ocean, and the opposite happens during a negative IOD.
 - Compared with ENSO events, the impact of IODs is much weaker but they can subdue the impact of ENSO



WORLD DRUG REPORT 2023 RELEASED BY THE UN OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

- The UNODC is a **global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime** headquartered in Vienna.
 - It provides **technical assistance, research and normative support** to Member States
- **Key findings of the report**
 - **23% increase in the previous decade in the number of people using drugs** (296 million) globally.
 - **45% increase in the past decade in people suffering from drug use disorder** (39.5 million).
 - The report stressed on
 - **Drug-related disparities and inequalities:**
 - **Inequality and social and economic disparities** continue to drive and be driven by the drug phenomenon.
 - Disparities between the global North and South, urban and rural settings, and across subpopulations all contribute to the harm from drugs.
 - **Illicit drug economies accelerating conflicts, human rights abuses, and environmental devastation**
 - **Illegal logging, mining and land occupation** along with wildlife trafficking leading to environmental damage like in Amazon forest.
 - **Illicit drug trade finances non-state armed and insurgency groups** in the Sahel region.
 - **Prioritizing public health in regulating medical use of controlled drugs:** Without adequate framework psychedelic drugs meant to medicinal use it could be diverted to illegal drug markets.
 - **Increasing dominance of synthetic drugs:** Criminals producing synthetic drugs like methamphetamine, Fentanyl create challenges for law and enforcement.

INDIA-US DIGITAL TRADE

- U.S. industry body **Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA)** has flagged India's "protectionist" approach to US digital services providers
- **Current status of India-U.S. technology trade:**
 - U.S. is **India's biggest overall trading partner** with bilateral trade of \$128.55 billion in 2022-23 in India's favor.
 - **U.S. ran a \$27 billion deficit** in trade in digital services with India in 2020.
- **Concerns in India-US Digital trade relations**
 - **Taxation:** Double taxation due to increased taxation in the form of equalization levy at a 6% rate and 2% tax on e-commerce operators.
 - **IT Rules 2021:** Problematic Policies like IT Rules 2021 leading to increased compliance burden like appointing Grievance redressal officer, compliance officer etc.
 - **Geospatial Data:** Discriminatory Regulatory practices like restriction on sharing geospatial data.
 - **Draft data protection law:** Restriction on cross border data transfer under **Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022.**
 - **Authoritative licensing requirements under** the proposed **Draft Telecommunication Bill 2022.**

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS TO INCREASE DIGITAL TRADE

Tech partnership through Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (ICET)

MoU signed between the two states on the Semiconductor Supply Chain and Innovation Partnership

Joint Task Forces to focus on the Open RAN network and research and development in 5G/6G technologies.

A joint fund for the commercialization of Artificial Intelligence.

SEVEN NEW PRODUCTS FROM UTTAR PRADESH GET GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI) TAG

GI Tag	Details
Amroha Dholak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical instrument made of natural wood hollow blocks fitted with animal skin, mostly goatskin.
Baghpat Home Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Products includes cotton handloom bedsheets, curtains, cushions, etc known for traditional geometric patterns.
Kalpi Handmade Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufactured in an eco-friendly manner using various types of paper scraps and not wood.
Mahoba Gaura Patthar Hastshipil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable stone craft made of radiant colored and off-white stone, Gaura.
Mainpuri Tarkash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known for its fine inlay work with brass wire, strips and motifs on dark sheesham extensively for furniture and boxes and mainly used for khadaous (wooden sandals)
Sambhal horn craft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handicraft art products are made from horns procured from dead animals making it environment and animal friendly.
Barabanki Handloom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main products are Scarfs, Shawls and stoles. The cluster is famous for weaving during the nawab's period of Lucknow.

- GI tag is a **type of intellectual property right** granted to a product originating from a specific geographical region.
 - **Geographical Indication Registry** in Chennai grants the GI tag under the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.**
 - **GI Tag is valid for a decade**, after which it can be renewed for another 10 years.
 - The first product to get a **GI tag in India was the Darjeeling tea in 2004.**

ALSO IN NEWS



Types of Startup

- Recently, a slowdown in startup funding was highlighted by a report released by Huron named **ASK private wealth Huron India future Unicorn Index, 2023**
- **Key findings**
 - The overall **number of unicorns declined** from the previous year.
 - There were **51 gazelles** and **96 cheetahs** in 2023 in India.
- **Different Categories of Startups**
 - **Unicorns** - Startups valued at over **\$1 billion.**
 - **Gazelles** - Startups valued at over **\$500 million and are likely to turn unicorns in three years.**
 - **Cheetahs** - Startups valued at **\$250 million and are likely to turn unicorn in five years.**



Sagar Samajik Sahayyog

- **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways** launched 'Sagar Samajik Sahayyog' - the new guidelines of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for ports.
- **According to the new guideline**
 - CSR Budget will be mandatorily created through a Board Resolution **as a percentage of net profit.**
 - 20% of CSR expenses must be earmarked to the **Sainik Kalyan Board.**
- CSR require certain companies to mandatorily spend at **least 2% of their average net profit of the immediately preceding three financial years on CSR activities** under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013.



Global competitiveness index

- Recently Global Competitiveness Index was published by the **International Institute for Management Development (IMD).**
- **About the Index**
 - Denmark, Ireland, and Switzerland have been named the top three among 64 economies measured for their global competitiveness.
 - **India dropped 3 spots to finish 40th** but is still in a better position than it was in 2019-2021.
 - The three main measures that helped India in its score are **exchange rate stability, compensation levels, and improvements in pollution control.**
- Note: The Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) is a yearly report published by the World Economic Forum.*



Burmese peacock softshell turtles

- **Burmese peacock softshell turtles is endemic to Myanmar.**
- It is one of five species in the **genus Nilssonina.**
- **It is an oviparous species**, meaning it lays eggs externally which then hatch after an incubation period.
- **IUCN status:** Critically Endangered
- **Threats:** highly sought after in East Asian food markets, habitat loss, accidental captures by fishermen, etc.

 <p>National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recently, the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying launched the “ Report Fish Disease App”.• The app was developed by CAR- National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFG) under National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD).• NSPAAD was launched by The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ It is implemented under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna.➤ It collects information on the distribution and occurrence of aquatic animal diseases to rapidly detect new and exotic infectious diseases in aquatic animals.
 <p>Global Forest Review (GFR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The World Resources Institute (WRI) and the University of Maryland updated GFR on the Global Forest Watch platform.• Key Findings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Tropical primary forest loss in 2022 totaled 4.1 million hectares, the equivalent of losing 11 football fields of forest per minute.➤ This forest loss produced 2.7 gigatonnes (Gt) of CO2 emissions, equivalent to India's annual fossil fuel emissions.
 <p>United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)</p>	<p>• Indian-origin expert Aarti Holla-Maini was appointed as the Director of the UNOOSA.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"><p style="text-align: center;">United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)</p><p style="text-align: right;"> Vienna, Austria</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genesis: Initially created as a small expert unit within the UN Secretariat in 1958, it was established in its present form in 1993.• Membership: 102 countries including India.• Objective: : To foster global collaboration in the peaceful utilization and exploration of outer space, as well as the effective application of space science and technology to achieve sustainable economic and social progress.• Functions: It assists any UN Member States to establish legal and regulatory frameworks to govern space activities and strengthens the capacity of developing countries to use space science technology and applications for development.</div>
 <p>QS World University Ranking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recently QS World University Ranking was released highlighting India's progress with IIT Bombay at rank 147.• QS World University Ranking is released by QS (Quacquarelli Symonds).• The rankings are based on indicators taking into account academic reputation, employer reputation and faculty research.• Three new metrics namely were also included in this year's rankings.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Sustainability➤ Employment Outcomes➤ International Research Network
 <p>Meira paibis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recently Indian Home Minister met with the Meira Paibis as part of his meetings with various civil society groups.• Meira paibis or “women torch bearers is a women's social movement in Manipur formed in 1977.• The Meira Paibis are loosely organised and have no rigid hierarchy or structure, or any overt political leanings.• They are Meitei women from all walks of life in the Imphal Valley.• Role: initially focused on fighting alcoholism and drug abuse has now expanded to countering human rights violations and the development of society at large.
 <p>Tam Pà Ling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recent research focuses on Tam Pà Ling Cave of Laos for studying the arrival of modern humans in mainland Asia.• The age of the lowest fossil, suggests modern humans arrived in this region between 86,000 and 68,000 years ago.• This evidence from Tam Pà Ling has pushed back the timing of Homo sapiens arrival in Southeast Asia.• A tooth some 150,000 years old belonging to a Denisovan was also found here.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Denisovan are the now-extinct human relatives otherwise known only from remains found in Siberia and Tibet.