

# NEWS TODAY

## CABINET APPROVES INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION (NRF) BILL, 2023 IN PARLIAMENT

- **Bill will establish NRF to promote R&D and foster a culture of research and innovation** throughout India's universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories.
- **Other Key Features**
  - **NRF, an apex body** to provide strategic direction of scientific research as per recommendations of National Education Policy (NEP), will be set up at an **estimated cost of Rs. 50,000 crore during five years (2023-28)**.
  - **Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be the administrative department** of NRF.
  - **NRF will be governed by a Governing Board** consisting of eminent researchers and professionals across disciplines.
    - **PM will be the ex-officio President of Board** and **Union Minister of Science & Technology & Union Minister of Education** will be **ex-officio Vice-Presidents**.
  - **NRF's functioning** will be governed **by an Executive Council chaired by Principal Scientific Adviser** to Government of India.
  - **NRF will forge collaborations among industry, academia, and government departments** and research institutions, and create an **interface mechanism for participation and contribution of industries** and State governments.
  - NRF will encourage **collaboration and increased spending by industry** on R&D.
  - **Bill will also repeal Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)** and subsume it into NRF.

### ABOUT SERB

- It is a **statutory body, Department of Science and Technology**, established through SERB Act 2008.
- Its **main function** is to **promote basic research in Science and Engineering** and to **provide financial assistance** for the same.
- **A regular faculty / researcher** in an academic / research institution can seek **research support**.
- Board also gives **special attention to young scientists** below the age of 35 years (relaxable).
- Board **offers JC Bose National Fellowship** and **RAMANUJAN Fellowship**.

## CABINET COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (CCEA) APPROVED A UNIQUE PACKAGE OF SCHEMES FOR FARMERS

- **Initiatives, with a total outlay of Rs.3.7 lakh crore, will boost farmers' income, strengthen natural / organic farming, rejuvenate soil productivity, and ensure food security.**
- **Announcement includes:**

PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness Generation, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother – Earth (PM-PRANAM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>PM-PRANAM</b>, announced in the 2023-24 Budget, aims to <b>incentivize States/ UTs to promote alternate fertilizers and balanced use of chemical fertilizers</b>.</li> <li>● <b>States/UTs which will adopt alternative fertilisers</b> will be incentivised with subsidy that is saved by reducing the use of chemical fertilisers</li> <li>● <b>No separate financial support</b> will be required.</li> </ul>
Market Development Assistance (MDA) for promoting Organic Fertilizers from GOBAR-Dhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources- Dhan) Plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>To support marketing of organic fertilizers</b>, viz., Fermented Organic Manures (FOM)/Liquid FOM/Phosphate Rich Organic Manures (PROM) produced as by-product <b>from bio-gas plants/Compressed Biogas (CBG) plants set up under umbrella GOBAR-Dhan initiative</b> will be promoted.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>GOBAR-Dhan was launched in 2018 under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) (SMB-G) to positively impact village cleanliness and generate wealth and energy from cattle and organic waste.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Such organic fertilizers would be <b>branded in the names of Bharat Brand FOM, LFOM and PROM</b>.</li> <li>● It will <b>facilitate implementation of Budget announcement of establishing 500 new waste to wealth plants</b> under GOBAR-Dhan scheme.</li> </ul>
For Urea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Introduction of Sulphur coated Urea (Urea Gold)</b>, for the first time, to <b>address sulphur deficiency of soil and save input costs for the farmers</b>.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It is <b>more economical and efficient than Neem coated urea</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Continuation of Urea Subsidy Scheme</b> to maximize indigenous production of Urea to reach self-sufficiency levels.</li> <li>● <b>By 2025-26, eight Nano urea plants</b> will be commissioned.</li> </ul>

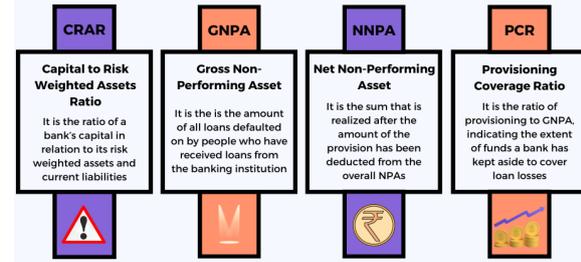
## RBI RELEASED THE FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT (FSR)

• FSR is a **bi-annual report** that reflects risks to financial stability and resilience of Indian financial system (Global FSR is released by IMF).

### • Key Highlights

- **Indian banking system is well capitalised** and capable of absorbing macroeconomic shocks over a one-year horizon even in the absence of any further capital infusion.
- **Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio** of Scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) continued its downtrend and fell to a **10-year low of 3.9% in March 2023**.
- **Net non-performing assets (NNPA) ratio** declined to **1.0%**.
- **Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of SCBs** rose to **historical highs of 17.1%** in March 2023.
- **Creating a framework for global regulation**, including possibility of prohibition, of **unbacked crypto assets, stablecoins etc.** would be a priority.
  - **Stablecoins** are cryptocurrencies whose **value is pegged to that of another currency, commodity, or financial instrument.**
- **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) has rescued 72% of the distressed assets** since it came into being in 2016.
  - **Average time for concluding** corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRPs) that yielded resolution plans **was 512 days** (330 days provided in IBC).

## Terms



## CABINET APPROVES RATIFICATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT (HQA) BETWEEN INDIA AND COALITION FOR DISASTER RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE (CDRI)

- In 2022, Cabinet had **approved recognition of CDRI as an International Organization** and for **signing of HQA** for granting **CDRI exemptions, immunities and privileges** as contemplated under Section- 3 of **United Nations (Privileges & Immunities) Act, 1947**.
  - Act was **enacted to give effect to Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations**, adopted by UN General Assembly in 1946.
    - **UN Charter allows UN, and also its officials**, to enjoy in the territory of each of its Members such **legal capacity, privileges and immunities** which are **necessary for the exercise of its functions** and the fulfilment of its purposes.
  - **Section 3 of the act** states that **premises of UN** shall be **inviolable**. Act was also extended to several other **international organisations**.
- **Signing of HQA** will provide **CDRI an independent and international legal persona**, so that it **can carry out its functions internationally**, more efficiently.
- **It will allow CDRI to**
  - **Deputing experts** and also bringing in experts from member countries to India.
  - **Deploying funds globally and receiving contributions** from member countries.
  - Providing **technical expertise** to assist countries to develop resilient infrastructure.
  - **Leveraging international engagement** to foster disaster resilient infrastructure at home.

### ABOUT CDRI

- It was **launched in 2019, by the Indian PM** (supported by UNDRR) as a **global partnership** of National Governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks, private sector, academic and knowledge institutions etc.
- Aims to **promote resilience of infrastructure systems** to climate and disaster risks, thereby ensuring sustainable development.
- Presently, CDRI **has 31 nations (including India)**, 6 International and 2 Private organisations as its members.

## NATIONAL SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA ELIMINATION MISSION

- Objective of the mission is to **provide affordable and accessible care** to all Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) patient, ensure **quality of care** and to **lower prevalence** of the disease.
  - Vision of the mission is to **eliminate SCD as a public health problem** in India **before 2047**.
- It will be **carried out in a mission mode** and will **emphasizes on a three-pillar strategy**:
  - **Health promotion**: Awareness generation & pre-marital genetic counselling.
  - **Prevention**: Universal screening and early detection.
  - **Holistic Management** & continuum of care.
- **Beneficiaries**: Covering the entire population **from zero to 18 years** of age and shall incrementally include the entire population up to 40 years as a part of National Health Mission (NHM).
  - **Initially, focus shall be on 17 states with higher prevalence of SCD** including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, MP, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Assam, UP, Kerala, Bihar, Uttarakhand etc.
  - **Mission aims to cover 7 crore people** with screening, counselling for prevention and care for people with SCD **in three and half years**.
- Programme would be in **integration with existing mechanism and strategies** (such as Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan) under NHM.

### SICKLE CELL DISEASE

- SCD is a **type of haemoglobin disorders**, inherited blood diseases that affect how oxygen is carried in the body.
- SCD is **characterized by a modification in the shape of the red blood cell** from a smooth, donut-shape into a crescent or half-moon shape.
  - **Misshapen cells lack plasticity** and can **block small blood vessels**, impairing blood flow.
  - This condition leads to **shortened red blood cell survival**, and **subsequent anaemia, often called sickle-cell anaemia**.
- In India, It is **more common in the tribal population** of India, but **occurs in non-tribals too**.

# MINISTRY OF MINES RELEASED FIRST EVER REPORT OF THE COUNTRY ON “CRITICAL MINERALS FOR INDIA”

## • Report identifies a set of 30 critical minerals.

- Critical minerals are those **minerals that are essential for economic development and national security**. Criticality is **judged mainly by two parameters**, economic importance and supply risk.
- **Lack of availability** of these minerals or **concentration** of extraction or processing **in a few geographical locations may lead to supply chain disruption or vulnerabilities**.

## • Indian critical minerals identification process addresses five core objectives of:

Supporting economic growth, Driving research, Enhancing Global security, Raw material security and Promoting climate action.

## • Report identifies five pillars of critical minerals value chain:

- Upstream exploration,
- Upstream Mining & extraction,
- Midstream- Processing, refining & metallurgy,
- Downstream- Component Manufacturing and Clean, Digital, and Advanced Technology Production,
- Material Recovery and Recycling.

## • Recommendations

- Establish a **National Institute or Centre of Excellence on critical minerals**.
- Create a **separate wing in the Ministry of Mines** and established a **Centre of Excellence for Critical Minerals**.
- **Collaborate with international agencies/KABIL** for strategic acquisition of foreign assets.
- **An innovation funding mechanism** to focus on **processing and refining technologies**.
- **Update the list of critical minerals** periodically , preferably every three years.

### Critical minerals for which India is 100% import-dependent

Mineral	Major application
Lithium	Rechargeable batteries, ceramics
Cobalt	Rechargeable batteries and superalloy
Nickel	Stainless steel, superalloys, rechargeable batteries
Vanadium	Alloying agent for iron and steel, batteries
Niobium	Steel and superalloys, construction, transportation
Germanium	Fiber optics and night vision applications
Rhenium	Superalloys, aerospace and machinery use
Beryllium	Alloying agent in aerospace and defense industries
Tantalum	Electronic components, mostly capacitors and in superalloys
Strontium	Aluminium pigments and fillers, glass, magnets

## ALSO IN NEWS



### Zero FIR

- **Manipur** is witnessing a **surge in Zero FIRs**.
- **When a police station receives a complaint** regarding an alleged offence that has been **committed in jurisdiction of another police station**, it **registers an FIR**, and then **transfers it to concerned police station** for further investigation.
- **This is called a Zero FIR**.
- **No regular FIR number** is given. After receiving Zero FIR, **concerned police station registers a fresh FIR**.



### Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)

- **Senegal** has become the **fourth country**, following South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam, to sign the **JETP deal**.
- JETP is emerging as the key **mechanism for multilateral financing by developed countries** to support an **energy transition in developing countries**.
  - It was **first announced at UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow**, where France, Germany, UK, USA, and EU announced JETP to support South Africa's decarbonization effort.
- Goal of JETP is to **support countries' transition from coal to cleaner energy sources while addressing social consequences**, such as job creation and economics impact.



### UNGA Secretary-General Children and Armed Conflict Report

- In view of the **measures taken by the Government to better protect children**, **India has been removed** from the report in 2023.
  - India was **mentioned in the report since 2010** for alleged **recruitment and use of boys by armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)**, **detainment of boys by Indian security forces** in J&K on national security grounds etc.
- Report includes trends **regarding impact of armed conflict on children** and information on violations committed, as **requested by Council in its resolution 1612 (2005)** and subsequent resolutions.

 <p><b>Duqm Port</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● India's <b>National Security Advisor visited port of Duqm in Oman</b> recently.</li><li>● <b>Facing the Arabian Sea</b> and located <b>outside Strait of Hormuz</b>, Port of Duqm is perfectly positioned to <b>serve the main Eastern and Western trade corridors</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ It also <b>overlooks the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean</b>.</li></ul></li><li>● <b>India in 2018</b> secured access Duqm <b>for military use and logistical support</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Port can also <b>provide India an easy access to Red Sea</b> via the Gulf of Aden.</li></ul></li></ul>
 <p><b>Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs <b>approved FRP of sugarcane for 2023-24 sugar season</b>.</li><li>● FRP is <b>minimum price at which sugarcane is to be purchased by sugar mills</b> from farmers.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ It is determined <b>under Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966</b>.</li></ul></li><li>● There is <b>dual pricing mechanism for sugarcane</b>:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>FRP</b> is announced <b>by central government</b> at recommendations of <b>Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)</b>.</li><li>➤ States can announce <b>State Advised Prices</b>, usually higher than FRP.</li></ul></li></ul>
 <p><b>Energy Transition Index (ETI)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>India is ranked 67th</b> out of 120 countries, in <b>World Economic Forum (WEF) ETI</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>Sweden topped the list</b> and was followed by Denmark and Norway.</li></ul></li><li>● <b>Key findings related to India</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>Only 55 countries</b>, including <b>India</b>, have <b>improved their scores</b> by more than <b>10% points</b>.</li><li>➤ <b>India is the only major economy</b> with energy transition momentum <b>accelerating across all the Index's dimensions</b> namely equitable, secure and sustainable transitions.</li><li>➤ <b>Requirements for India's energy transition</b>: skilled workforce, public-private collaboration in innovation, and investment in research and development in low-carbon technologies.</li></ul></li></ul>
 <p><b>Sharenting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>West Bengal's CID department</b> have organised a campaign aims in <b>sensitising parents on the perils of Sharenting</b>.</li><li>● Sharenting refers to the act of <b>parents posting too many details about their children on social media</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ It could be <b>detrimental for child's psychological growth</b> and also increases <b>risk of details being used by Cyber criminals</b>.</li></ul></li><li>● It also requested that <b>information about the child are to be posted with extreme caution</b>.</li></ul>
 <p><b>Exercise Tarang Shakti</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Indian Air Force will host the first ever multilateral air force exercise "Tarang Shakti"</b> later this year.</li></ul>
 <p><b>New Certification Scheme for Antibiotic manufacturing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Certification was <b>launched by British Standards Institute (BSI) and AMR Industry Alliance</b> to ensure responsible antibiotic manufacturing.</li><li>● Certification, with a third-party validation process, <b>will help to monitor environmental concerns</b> in the antibiotic manufacturing process.</li><li>● <b>Antibiotic concentration at the release point must be less than the predicted no-effect concentration</b> to meet the certification standard.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>Certificate</b>, once issued, is <b>valid for three years</b>.</li></ul></li><li>● It will ensure implementation of <b>Antibiotic Manufacturing Standards</b> launched in 2022.</li></ul>
 <p><b>Terms in News</b></p>	<p><b>Greedflation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Greedflation, in basic terms, is the <b>inflation and hike in prices</b> not driven by economic flow, but <b>by corporate greed</b>.</li><li>● It can be understood as <b>a condition where corporate desire for excessive profit</b> (greed) is leading to <b>inflation</b>.</li><li>● Companies artificially inflate their prices not just to cover the input cost but <b>to increase their profit margins</b>.</li></ul> <p><b>Emotional Labour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● It is defined as <b>editing work of emotions</b> that <b>someone would do</b> in order <b>to have an effect on the emotions of someone else</b>.</li><li>● American sociologist <b>Arlie Hochschild first introduced the concept in 1983</b> to mean that <b>emotions have a market and exchange value</b> in capitalist society.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ People are required to <b>regulate their emotions to fit in with the emotional norm, and to ensure the smooth flow of business</b> necessary to get a wage.</li><li>➤ Emotional labour <b>falls disproportionately on women</b> and <b>other disadvantaged groups</b>.</li></ul></li></ul>