

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 02-09-2024

### Table of Content

- President Unveils New Flag & Insignia Of Supreme Court To Mark Its 75th Year
- India-Pakistan Relations
- Legal Validity of Lie-Detector Tests
- NITI Aayog Report on Edible Oils
- EU's 2030 Emission Targets 'Alarmingly Off-Track' from Paris Agreement's 1.5°C Goal
- Enzyme Manufacturing to Boost Ethanol Industry

### NEWS IN SHORT

- Munich Agreement
- Namibia
- India recorded its Warmest August Since 1901
- Telecommunications (Administration of Digital Bharat Nidhi) Rules, 2024
- Vadhvan Port
- India Post Payments Bank
- Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

## PRESIDENT UNVEILS NEW FLAG & INSIGNIA OF SUPREME COURT TO MARK ITS 75TH YEAR

### Context

- President Droupadi Murmu **unveiled the new flag and insignia of the Supreme Court** to mark the 75th year of its establishment.

### About

- The flag features the **Ashoka Chakra, the Supreme Court building and the book of the Constitution of India.**
- The new Supreme Court flag is **blue in colour.** The insignia has 'Supreme Court of India' and '**Yato Dharmastato Jayah**' (in Devanagari script) inscribed on it.
  - The phrase "Yato Dharmastato Jayah" is a Sanskrit expression that translates to "**Where there is Dharma, there is victory**" or "Victory lies where Dharma (righteousness) prevails."
  - Ashok Chakra represents the dharmachakra or "wheel of the law". This symbol is inspired by the Sarnath Lion Capital, which was created by the 3rd-century BC Mauryan Emperor Ashoka.



## Establishment of Supreme Court (SC) of India

- Article 124** of the Constitution states that "There shall be a Supreme Court of India."
- On 28 January 1950**, two days after India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic, the Supreme Court was inaugurated.
- The first President of India **Dr. Rajendra Prasad** inaugurated the present building of the Supreme Court of India **on 4 August 1958.**
- The original Constitution of 1950** envisaged a Supreme Court with a **Chief Justice and 7 puisne Judges** – leaving it to Parliament to increase this number.
  - Considering the increase in workload, Parliament increased the number of Judges from 8 in 1950 to 11 in 1956, 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986, 31 in 2009 and 34 in 2019 (current strength).
- The Supreme Court Officers and Servants (Conditions of Service and Conduct) Rules, 1961** contains the rules with respect to the conditions of service and conduct of the staff attached to the Supreme Court of India.

## Mother and Child Sculpture

- A black bronze sculpture** of 210 centimeter height was installed in lawn of the Supreme Court in **1978.**
- It portrays **Mother India** in the form of the figure of a lady.
- The lady is sheltering the **young Republic of India** represented by the symbol of a child, who is upholding the laws of land symbolically shown in the form of an open book.
- In the book, a balance is shown, which represents dispensation of **equal justice to all.** The sculpture was made by the renowned artist **Shri Chintamani Kar.**



### Brief on Judiciary in India

- **The Supreme court** is the highest court in India, with the authority to interpret the Constitution, adjudicate disputes between states and the center, and oversee the legality of laws and government actions.
- **Each state or group of states has a High Court**, which handles appeals from lower courts and issues related to state-level legal matters.
- **District Courts** handle civil and criminal cases at the district level, and various specialized courts such as family courts, consumer courts, and labor courts.
- **Each branch operates independently** but is designed to work in harmony with the others, providing a system of checks and balances to ensure fair governance and adherence to the Constitution.

### Key Functions of the Supreme Court of India:

- **Judicial Review:** It reviews the constitutionality of laws and executive actions. If a law or action is found to violate the Constitution, the Court can strike it down.
- **Original Jurisdiction:** It has the authority to hear certain types of cases directly, including disputes between states or between the central government and states. This is called original jurisdiction.
- **Appellate Jurisdiction:** It hears appeals from lower courts and tribunals. This includes civil, criminal, and constitutional matters.
  - ♦ The Supreme Court can overturn or modify decisions made by lower courts.
- **Constitutional Interpretation:** It interprets the provisions of the Constitution.
  - ♦ This function is crucial for clarifying the meaning and application of constitutional principles.
- **Protection of Fundamental Rights:** It ensures the protection of fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.
- **Advisory Jurisdiction:** The President of India can seek the Court's opinion on legal or constitutional questions.
  - ♦ While the Court's advice is not binding, it is highly influential.
- **Judicial Administration:** It oversees the functioning of lower courts and provides guidelines for their operation. It also plays a role in the appointment and transfer of judges.

- **Public Interest Litigation (PIL):** The Court entertains PILs, allowing individuals or groups to seek judicial redress for issues affecting the public at large.

Source: PIB

## INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

### Context

- A new survey by the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) found that the **relations between India and Pakistan are unlikely to become better in future.**

### About

- The downturn in ties between India and Pakistan since 2016, after which no high-level bilateral talks have been held, is clearly mirrored in the survey.
- Previous surveys in 2011 and 2013 had indicated a much higher optimism for reconciliation in the subcontinent.

### Brief on India- Pakistan Relations

- India-Pakistan relations are complex and have been marked by **periods of tension, conflict, and occasional cooperation** since the two countries gained independence from Britain in 1947.

### Timeline

- **Partition and Early Conflicts:** The partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947 led to large-scale migrations and violence.
  - ♦ The first major conflict came with the First Kashmir War (1947-48) over the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Wars and Conflicts:** The two countries fought three more major wars:
  - ♦ **1965 War:** Another conflict over Kashmir, resulting in a UN-mandated ceasefire.
  - ♦ **1971 War:** Resulted in the independence of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) after a brutal conflict.
  - ♦ **1999 Kargil Conflict:** A brief but intense conflict in the Kargil district of Kashmir where India emerged victorious.
- **Nuclearization:** Both countries conducted nuclear tests in 1998, this has added a new dimension to the strategic calculus.
- **Peace Efforts and Dialogues:** There have been numerous attempts at dialogue and peace-

building, including the Agra Summit (2001) and the Lahore Summit (1999).

- ◆ However, progress has often been stymied by various issues, including terrorism and cross-border violence by Pakistan.
- **Terrorism and Security Issues:** Attacks like the 2001 Indian Parliament attack and the 2008 Mumbai attacks have significantly strained relations.
  - ◆ The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan has been accused of playing a role in several terrorist attacks in India.
- **Pulwama Attack:** In February 2019, an attack on a convoy of Indian paramilitary forces in Pulwama, Kashmir, killed at least forty soldiers.
  - ◆ The attack, claimed by the Pakistani militant group JeM, was the deadliest in Kashmir in three decades.
  - ◆ India retaliated by conducting an air strike that targeted terrorist training camps within Pakistani territory.
- **Current Dynamics:** The relations remain strained, with sporadic dialogue and efforts at normalization, but ongoing issues like the Kashmir dispute, cross-border terrorism, and political tensions continue to dominate the relationship.

### Areas of Cooperation

- **Indus Water Treaty:** This treaty, established in 1960, governs the use of the Indus River and its tributaries.
  - ◆ Despite ongoing disputes, it has largely been successful in managing water resources between the two countries.
- **Kartarpur Corridor Agreement (2019):** An Agreement between India and Pakistan for the facilitation of pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Pakistan, was signed in 2019 in order to fulfill the the long-standing demand of the pilgrims to have easy and smooth access to the holy Gurudwara.
- **Cricket:** Cricket matches between India and Pakistan often attract widespread attention and have sometimes been used as a platform to ease tensions and foster goodwill.
- **Bilateral Talks:** Periodic diplomatic dialogues and summits, despite their ups and downs, provide platforms for addressing various issues and finding common ground.
- **Peace Agreements:** Simla Agreement (1972), Lahore Summit Declaration (1999), Agra Summit (2001) are the major peace establishing agreements signed between both the countries.

### Way Ahead

- Both countries have significant internal and external challenges that impact their bilateral relations.
- In keeping with its “**Neighbourhood First Policy**”, India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan.
- India has made clear that it **will not compromise** on issues relating to **national security** and will take **firm and decisive steps** to deal with all attempts to undermine **India’s security and territorial integrity**.

Source: TH

## LEGAL VALIDITY OF LIE-DETECTOR TESTS

### Context

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted a second round of polygraph tests on seven people, in connection with the rape and murder of a doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College in Kolkata.

### What are deception detection tests?

- Deception detection tests (DDTs) are scientific procedures employed to detect probable deception during interrogation.
- These tests include narco-analysis, polygraph tests, and brain mapping.

### Polygraph test

- A polygraph test operates on the presumption that **specific physiological responses are triggered when a person is lying**.
- The test is administered by attaching instruments like **cardio-cuffs or sensitive electrodes** to the suspect to measure variables such as blood pressure, galvanic skin response (a proxy for sweat), breathing and pulse rate.
- As questions are posed, each physiological response is assigned a numerical value to determine whether the individual is telling the truth or being deceptive.

### Narco-Analysis

- It involves the injection of a drug called **sodium pentothal** into the accused, inducing a hypnotic or sedated state.
- The assumption is that a subject in such a state is less inhibited and is more likely to divulge information.

- Because the drug is thought to weaken the subject's resolve to lie, it is often referred to as a **"truth serum."**

### Brain mapping

- It measures a subject's neural activity, specifically brainwaves, using electrodes attached to the face and neck.
- It operates on the principle that the brain generates **distinctive brain waves** when exposed to familiar stimuli, such as an image or a sound.

### Legal validity of test

- Prior to 2010**, Indian courts were strongly in favor of these tests. They pitched these "scientific methods of investigation" as a **safer alternative to the custodial violence** often used to extract information.
- The Supreme Court in 2010** in the case of **Selvi v. State of Karnataka** ruled that no lie detector tests should be administered **"except on the basis of consent of the accused"** in accordance with the fundamental right against self-incrimination as enshrined under **Article 20(3)** of the Constitution.
- Further it was elucidated that a person's right to make a statement or remain silent is integral to their **right to privacy**.
  - Thus compelling an individual to make a statement would also constitute a violation of **Article 21** of the Constitution.
- The Court also noted that little empirical evidence is present to bolster the argument that these tests provide reliable leads for investigators.
- It cautioned that the results of these tests **cannot be regarded as confessions**.
  - However, if any information or material is subsequently discovered **"with the help of voluntarily administered test results,"** such evidence can be admitted in court.
- Additionally, it required that the subject's consent be formally **recorded before a judicial magistrate** and that the guidelines set out by the **National Human Rights Commission in 2000** for administering these tests be strictly adhered to.

### What are the concerns?

- In a **2010** paper published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research, it was observed that lie-detection techniques have faced a number of criticisms, and their effectiveness in revealing

"concealed knowledge in applied real-world settings" remains uncertain.

- It argued the reliability of polygraph tests, pointing out that the **test's underlying principle is flawed**—parameters such as heart rate and blood pressure have not been proven to be uniquely indicative of lying.
- Similarly, a **2019 study** conducted in the United States flagged high false positive rates and noted that individuals can train themselves to beat a polygraph.
- Despite the Supreme Court's cautionary stance, the administration of these tests continues to be prevalent in India.

Source: TH

## NITI AAYOG REPORT ON EDIBLE OILS

### Context

- The report titled "Pathways and Strategies for Accelerating Growth in Edible Oils Towards the Goal of Atmanirbharta" was released by NITI Aayog.

### Key highlights of the report

- India's edible vegetable oil sector is a significant player on the global stage, **ranking fourth** behind the **USA, China, and Brazil**.
- In India there are **seven major oilseed-growing states** i.e. Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka.

Table 2.2: India's position in the global edible oil production market (2022-23)

Edible Oil Crop	India's Rank	Share in world production (%)	Next to
Groundnuts, excluding shelled	2nd	18.69	China
Groundnut Oil	2nd	16.34	China (2021)
Soybean	5th	3.72	Brazil, USA, Argentina, China
Soybean Oil	5th	2.14	China, USA, Brazil, Argentina (2021)
Castor Seed	1st	88.48	NA
Rapeseed	3rd	13.72	Canada, China
Rapeseed or Canola Oil	4th	11.21	Canada, Germany, China (2021)
Safflower	5th	6.15	Kazakhstan, Russia, USA, Mexico
Safflower Seed Oil, Crude	2nd	18.43	USA (2021)
Sesame Seed	2nd	11.70	Sudan
Sesame Seed Oil	3rd	8.73	China, Myanmar (2021)
Linseed	5th	3.18	Russia, Kazakhstan, Canada, China
Linseed Oil	6th	5.03	China, Belgium, USA, Germany, Russia (2021)
Rice bran oil	1st	46.8	NA
Cotton seed oil	2nd	28.41	China
Coconuts, in shell	3rd	22.46	Indonesia, Philippines
Coconut oil	3rd	14.20	Indonesia, Philippines

- **Demand:** The report highlights that over the past decades, **per capita consumption** of edible oil in the country has seen rise, reaching **19.7 kg/year**.
  - ♦ This surge in demand has significantly outpaced domestic production, leading to a heavy reliance on imports to meet both domestic and industrial needs.
- **Import:** In **2022-23**, India imported **16.5 million tonnes (MT)** of edible oils, with domestic production fulfilling only **40-45%** of the country's requirements.
  - ♦ This situation presents a substantial challenge to the country's goal of achieving self-sufficiency in edible oils.
- **Under a Business-As-Usual (BAU) scenario**, the national supply of edible oil is projected to increase to **16 MT by 2030** and **26.7 MT by 2047**.

### Initiatives taken by Government

- **National Mission for Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP):** The mission is committed to escalating oil palm cultivation and elevating Crude Palm Oil production to 11.20 lakh tonnes by 2025-26.
- **National Food Security Mission- Oilseeds (NFSM-OS)** is being implemented by the government from 2018-19 to augment the availability of edible oils and reduce the import burden by increasing the production and productivity of oilseeds and area expansion of Oil Palm & Tree Borne Oilseeds.
- The government **increased the Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for Oilseeds.

### Suggestions

- To achieve self-sufficiency in this sector, the report suggests several strategic interventions to bridge the existing gap and ensure long-term sustainability.
- The proposed strategy is structured across **three key pillars**:
  - ♦ **Crop Retention and Diversification,**
  - ♦ **Horizontal Expansion:** The Strategy aims to strategically **increase the area** dedicated to cultivating edible oil crops. Potential avenues include the utilization of rice fallow lands and highly suitable wastelands.
  - ♦ **Vertical Expansion:** The Strategy focuses on **enhancing the yield** of existing oilseed cultivation. This can be achieved through

improved farming practices, better-quality seeds, and advanced production technologies.

**Source: PIB**

## EU'S 2030 EMISSION TARGETS 'ALARMINGLY OFF-TRACK' FROM PARIS AGREEMENT'S 1.5°C GOAL

### Context

- Recently, Non-profit groups in Europe have taken legal action against the European Commission, arguing that the European Union's (EU) 2030 emission targets are falling short of the ambitious goals set by the Paris Agreement.

### About the Paris Agreement (2015)

- It was adopted during the **UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris**, France in 2015.
- It represents a collective effort by 196 Parties to address the urgent challenge of global warming.

### Temperature Goals

- The overarching goal of the Paris Agreement is to limit the increase in the **global average temperature** to well **below 2°C above pre-industrial levels**.
- Additionally, there's a **strong emphasis** on efforts to limit the temperature rise to an even more ambitious target: **1.5°C above pre-industrial levels**.
- **Why the Focus on 1.5°C:** Scientific evidence from the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** suggests that crossing the 1.5°C threshold could lead to severe climate impacts, including more frequent and intense droughts, heatwaves, and extreme rainfall events.

### Emission Reductions

- To achieve these temperature goals, countries commit to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Agreement recognises that emissions must peak before 2025 at the latest and **decline by 43% by 2030** to stay on track for the 1.5°C target.

### Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- Each country communicates its climate action plan through its NDC.
- NDCs outline both mitigation (emission reduction) and adaptation measures.

- Countries are encouraged to progressively enhance the ambition of their NDCs over time.

### Long-Term Strategies

- The Paris Agreement invites countries to formulate and submit **long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS)**.
- While not mandatory, these LT-LEDS provide a vision for future development and align with the NDCs.

### Global Cooperation and Support

- The Agreement establishes a framework for financial, technical, and capacity-building support to countries.
- Developed nations pledge to assist developing countries in their climate efforts.

### Five-Year Review Cycle

- The Paris Agreement operates on a five-year cycle.
- Countries periodically update their NDCs, aiming for increased ambition with each iteration.

### What are the challenges faced by the EU?

- **Inadequate Targets:** CAN-Europe and GLAN contend that the EU's emission reduction goals are insufficient to meet the Paris Agreement's objective of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.
  - ♦ It marks the first time the EU courts will scrutinise the adequacy of the bloc's climate targets.
- **Science-Based Approach:** The European Court of Human Rights previously emphasised that states must adopt science-based emissions targets consistent with the 1.5°C goal.
  - ♦ However, the EU's 2030 targets were not derived from the best available climate science, a point that the Commission has not contested in its defence.
- **Request for Internal Review:** In August 2023, GLAN and CAN-Europe submitted a Request for Internal Review (RIR) regarding the **Annual Emissions Allocations (AEA)** set by the European Commission for individual member states.
  - ♦ Unfortunately, the Commission denied the request, leading to the legal case filed on February 27, 2024.

### Urgency

- **Climate Crisis:** Given the urgency of the climate crisis, the court has granted this case priority

status, scheduling it for a hearing in 2025.

- ♦ AEAs related to emissions covered by the EU Effort-Sharing Regulation, which sets national goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in sectors like transport, buildings, agriculture, small industry, and waste.
- **Lack of Scientific Assessment:** The heart of the legal challenge lies in the EU's failure to conduct a proper scientific assessment of the necessary emissions reductions to keep global warming below 1.5°C.
  - ♦ The targets currently in place are deemed insufficient and could lead to a disastrous 3°C rise by 2100 if all nations follow similar paths.

### What's at Stake?

- **Raising Emissions Reduction Ambition:** If successful, this legal challenge could prompt the EU and its member states to significantly raise their emissions reduction ambitions.
  - ♦ Aligning with EU environmental regulations is crucial to meeting the Paris Agreement's goals.
- **Global Impact:** The EU's actions matter globally. As one of the largest economies and a major emitter, the EU's commitment to aggressive climate targets sends a powerful signal to other nations.

Source: DTE

## ENZYME MANUFACTURING TO BOOST ETHANOL INDUSTRY

### In News

- The Department of Biotechnology is considering setting up enzyme-manufacturing facilities to support **ethanol production**.

### About

- The first plant may be established in Manesar, Haryana.
- The facility will supply enzymes to 2G bioethanol plants in Mathura (Uttar Pradesh), Bhatinda (Punjab), and an existing plant in Panipat.

### Do you know ?

- Enzymes are derived from a genetically engineered fungus, *Penicillium funiculosum*.
- Enzymes, crucial for converting stubble into ethanol, are currently imported and are costly.
- Using locally developed enzymes could reduce costs by about two-thirds compared to imported enzymes.

### Ethanol Production:

- Ethanol is an **agricultural by-product** which is mainly obtained from the processing of **sugar** from **sugarcane**, but also from **other sources such as rice husk or maize**.
- India's total ethanol production capacity is **currently 1,589 crore litres**.

### Focus:

- The current emphasis is on **first-generation (1G) ethanol** from food grains and sugarcane.
- There are calls to diversify into **second-generation (2G)** and **third-generation (3G) ethanol** to mitigate food security impacts.
  - 2G bioethanol** is produced from agricultural waste like rice straw, unlike conventional ethanol from molasses.
  - Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. operates a 2G ethanol plant in Panipat using rice stubble as feedstock.

### Ethanol Blending Target:

- Ethanol blending in India reached **13.3% by July 2024**, up from 12.6% during the 2022-23 season.
- The Union government aims to increase the **ethanol blending rate** in petrol to **20% by 2025**, up from the current 13%.

### Importance

- Production of ethanol has led to proportionate reduction in the import of petroleum or crude oil which has resulted in **saving of foreign exchange** for India
  - India's ethanol blending program** has saved Rs 99,014 crore in foreign exchange since 2014
- Ethanol production has **recharged rural economies**, providing employment opportunities and improving livelihoods.
- By utilising surplus crops and damaged food grains for ethanol production, farmers have found an **additional source of income**.

### Initiatives

- The Indian government is implementing an **Ethanol Blending Program (EBP)** across the country, under which oil marketing companies (OMCs) sell petrol blended with ethanol.
- The government has **lifted restrictions on ethanol production** from sugarcane juice,

B-heavy, and C-heavy molasses for the ethanol supply year starting in November.

### Concerns:

- In tropical countries like India and Brazil, sugarcane is more efficient for ethanol production.
  - However, intensive sugarcane cultivation can lead to **environmental and food production challenges**.
- Increased maize imports and use for ethanol production are raising concerns about food security.

### State-Level Differences:

- States have different impacts and responses to ethanol policies. For instance:
  - Uttar Pradesh is a major contributor to the ethanol blending program and supports the central government's ethanol mission.
  - Tamil Nadu is cautious about ethanol due to its liquor market and water concerns, preferring maize as an alternative feedstock.
  - Maharashtra finds more profit in producing Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) for other uses rather than ethanol blending.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- India faces a dilemma between meeting ethanol targets and managing food inflation.
  - Options include reconsidering the ethanol target, investing in public infrastructure, and focusing on renewable energy sources like solar power.
- The future policies must involve close collaboration between the central and state governments.
  - It should provide sustained financial and infrastructural support to achieve meaningful results, rather than expecting immediate returns.

Source: TH

## NEWS IN SHORT

### MUNICH AGREEMENT

#### Context

- On September 1st, **1939** German troops marched into Poland, triggering the beginning of **World War II**, that exposed to the world the folly of the Munich Agreement that was **signed less than a year** previously.



## About the Munich Agreement

- On September 29-30, 1938, in Munich, an agreement was reached—one that would have far-reaching consequences for Europe and the world.
- It emerged **against the backdrop of rising tensions in Europe**.
- **Adolf Hitler**, the leader of Nazi Germany, had set his sights on the **Sudetenland—a region in Czechoslovakia** with a significant German-speaking population.
- The **Sudeten Germans**, who found themselves part of Czechoslovakia after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I, yearned to be **part of a 'Greater Germany'**.

## Key Players

- **Nazi Germany:** Led by Hitler, Germany sought territorial expansion.
- **United Kingdom:** Represented by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who believed in appeasement as a means to prevent war.
- **France:** French Prime Minister Édouard Daladier participated in the negotiations.
- **Italy:** Benito Mussolini, Italy's Prime Minister, also had a seat at the table.

## Deal

- The Munich Agreement **allowed for the German annexation of the Sudetenland**, where over three million ethnic Germans lived.
- **Appeasement Diplomacy:** Chamberlain, eager to avoid conflict, met Hitler in Munich.
  - ♦ The agreement was based on an Italian proposal: Germany would gain control of Sudetenland, and in return, Hitler promised not to pursue further territorial expansion.
- **Czechoslovakia's Dilemma:** The Czechoslovak government was not officially part of the negotiations.
  - ♦ Under pressure from Britain and France, they reluctantly agreed to the deal.

## Fallout and Lessons

- **False Security:** The Munich Agreement was hailed as a triumph for peace, but it proved illusory. Hitler's ambitions went beyond Sudetenland.

- **War Looms:** Within a year, Nazi Germany invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, and World War II began in earnest.
- **Historical Judgement:** The Munich Agreement remains a stark lesson in the dangers of appeasement. Placating expansionist regimes rarely leads to lasting peace.

Source: IE

## NAMIBIA

### In News

- Namibia is experiencing its worst drought in a century, exacerbated by El Niño.

### Status

- Food availability is critically low; staple crops and livestock have perished.
- Approximately 1.2 million people face high levels of acute food insecurity.
- Therefore, The government plans to cull 723 wild animals (including elephants, hippos, buffaloes, impalas, blue wildebeests, zebras, and elands) to provide meat.

### About Namibia

- The Republic of Namibia is situated on the southwestern coast of Africa and borders Angola and Zambia in the north, the Republic of South Africa in the south and Botswana in the east.



- The Namibian landscape consists generally of five geographical areas, each with characteristic abiotic conditions and vegetation with some variation within and overlap between them: **the Central Plateau, the Namib Desert, the Escarpment, the Bushveld, and the Kalahari Desert.**
- Mountains – **Brandberg** (with the height of 2,573 m), Spitzkoppe, Molteblick, Gamsberg.
- **Rivers** – Orange, Kunene, Okavango, Zambezi.

Source:IE

## INDIA RECORDED ITS WARMEST AUGUST SINCE 1901

### Context

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that **India recorded its warmest August since 1901**.

### About

- The all-India average monthly minimum temperature rose to an **all-time record of 24.29 degrees Celsius** for August. The normal is 23.68 degrees Celsius.
- As **good rainfall activity** was recorded during August, the persistent cloudy conditions pushed the minimum temperatures above normal.
- The all-India rainfall for August ended with a **surplus of 15.3 per cent**.
  - This was the second highest August rainfall over the country since 2019.

### India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- It was established in 1875.
- It is the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects.
- It is under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

Source: IE

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS (ADMINISTRATION OF DIGITAL BHARAT NIDHI) RULES, 2024

### Context

- The Department of Telecommunication, notified 'Telecommunications (Administration of Digital Bharat Nidhi) Rules, 2024', the first set of rules under the Telecommunications Act, 2023 .

### About

- The **Universal Service Obligation Fund** created under the **Indian Telegraph Act, 1885** has rechristened as **Digital Bharat Nidhi** under the **Telecommunications Act, 2024**.
- It stipulates that funds from the Digital Bharat Nidhi will be allocated to projects aimed at improving telecommunication services in **underserved and remote areas** and for underserved groups of the society.

## Telecommunications Rules, 2024

- The rules provide for **powers and functions of administrator**, who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and administration of the Digital Bharat Nidhi.
- The Implementer, receiving funding from the Digital Bharat Nidhi for operating telecommunication network, shall **make available such network/ services on an open and non-discriminatory basis**.
- The rules also provide for **criteria for undertaking schemes** and projects under Digital Bharat Nidhi and selection process for implementers.

### Criteria for undertaking schemes and project

- These include projects for provision of telecommunication services, including mobile and broadband services and telecommunication equipment required for delivery of telecommunication services;
- Introduction of next generation telecommunication technologies in underserved rural, remote and urban areas;
- Promoting innovation, research and development; and commercialisation of indigenous technology development and associated intellectual property including creation of regulatory sandboxes,
- Developing and establishing relevant standards to meet national and international requirements;
- To create a bridge between academia, research institutes, start-ups and industry for capacity building and development; and
- To promote sustainable and green technologies in the telecommunications sector.

Source: PIB

## VADHVAN PORT

### In News

- Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the **Vadhvan Port project** in Palghar, Maharashtra

### About the port

- JNPA, in collaboration with the Government of Maharashtra and Maharashtra Maritime Board, proposed the development of Vadhvan Port.
- It will be one of India's largest deep-water ports. The project is estimated to cost around 76,000 crore.

- The port will be developed based on the **Landlord Port**. In the landlord model, private players take over the operational aspects, while the port authority acts as a regulator and landlord.
- **Capacity**: Expected to be among the top 10 ports globally, with a handling capacity of 23.2 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs).
- **Functionality**: Designed to handle large container vessels, offer deeper drafts, and accommodate ultra-large cargo ships.

### Significance

- This will be one of India's largest deep-water ports and will significantly reduce the transit times and costs by providing direct connectivity to international shipping routes like: International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).
- Further, the port is expected to generate significant employment opportunities, stimulate local businesses, and contribute to the overall economic development of the region.

Source:TH

## INDIA POST PAYMENTS BANK

### Context

- Recently, India Post Payments Bank has established many new dimensions in its journey of 6 years by promoting 'Aapka Bank, Aapke Dwar'.

### About the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)

- It is an undertaking of the **Department of Posts, Ministry of Communication & Technology**, launched nationwide in **2018**.
- It was established with a **mission to promote financial inclusion** and contribute to Digital India, and has become a **vital player in rural areas**.

### Empowering the Last Mile

- IPPB targets some of the most financially excluded and vulnerable sections of society.

- **Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks** act as mobile banks, delivering various services like Aadhaar enrollment for children up to 5 years old; Mobile updates through CELC service; Digital life certificates; Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT); Aadhaar-enabled payment system; Bill payments; Insurance services (vehicle, health, accident, and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana); Online deposits in Sukanya, RD, PPF, and Postal Life Insurance.
- **Women Empowerment**: A remarkable 44% of IPPB customers are women, highlighting its crucial role in empowering women through financial services.

Source: PIB

## RULE 170 OF THE DRUGS AND COSMETICS ACT.

### Context

- The Supreme Court pulled up the AYUSH ministry for its notification asking state licensing authorities "not to initiate/take any action under" **Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act**.

### About

- In **2018**, the government brought in Rule 170 to **govern the manufacture, storage, and sale of medicines** in the country, specifically **for controlling inappropriate advertisements of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani medicines**.
- The rule prohibits AYUSH drug manufacturers from advertising their products without approval and allotment of a **unique identification number from the state licensing authority**.
  - ♦ The manufacturers have to submit textual references and rationale for the medicine from authoritative books, indication for use, evidence of safety, effectiveness, and quality of drugs.
- The rule was introduced after a parliamentary standing committee highlighted the **problem of misleading claims**, and the need for the AYUSH ministry to proactively pursue the issue.

Source: IE

