

Union Minister for Women and Child Development Launched 'Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat' Campaign 'Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat' Campaign

The campaign calls on all citizens to actively oppose child marriage and is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Women and Child Development and various other Ministries.

About the Campaign

- **Focus Areas:** In seven States with high burden of child marriages and in nearly 300 high-burden districts.
- **Collaborative approach:** Call on every State and Union Territory to devise an action plan aimed at reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029.
- **Child Marriage Free Bharat Portal:** An innovative online platform that enables citizens to report child marriage incidents, file complaints, and access information about Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) nationwide.

Status of Child Marriage in India

- **Reduction in Child Marriage:** As per NFHS-5, Child marriage has decreased from 47.4% in 2005–06 to 26.8% in 2015–16.
- **Variation by household wealth:** According to NFHS-5, 40% of females in the lowest quintile married before the age of 18, compared to only 8% in the highest quintile.
- **States with high prevalence:** West Bengal, Bihar, Tripura, Jharkhand, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Steps taken by government

- **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA):** Prohibits child marriages where females are under 18 and males are under 21.
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:** India is a signatory.
- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):** Runs awareness programs to fight child marriage.

Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon entered into a ceasefire agreement

Israel and Lebanon have accepted a US-backed proposal to end the 13-month border conflict that spiraled into an all-out war.

About the Agreement

- The ceasefire agreement draws on the provisions of Resolution 1701 passed by the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2006.
- Israel: Israel Defense Forces (IDF) withdrawal to the Blue line within 60 days
 - The Blue Line was set by the UN in 2000 and serves as a de facto border between Israel and Lebanon.
- Hezbollah: To remove all fighters and weapons from south of the Litani river.
- Lebanon: Lebanese army and United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to replace IDF and Hezbollah in south Lebanon.
 - No foreign forces or supply of arms without the consent of the government.

About Resolution 1701

- The UN Security Council resolution ended the Israel-Hezbollah war of 2006.
- It stipulates that the only armed groups in the area south of Lebanon's Litani River should be the Lebanese army and UN peacekeeping forces (UN Interim Force in Lebanon – UNIFIL).

Soaring Water demand and Groundwater depletion caused Earth's axis to tilt by 31.5 inches: Study

A recent study published in Geophysical Research Letters shows that excessive groundwater extraction has shifted Earth's rotational pole, highlighting the impact of human activities on the planet.

Key Findings of the Study

- Between 1993 and 2010, excessive groundwater extraction caused Earth's rotational pole to shift 80 cm eastward, which contributed to a 0.24-inch rise in sea levels by altering planet's mass distribution.
- Shift in Earth's rotational axis is driven by movement of groundwater from aquifers to oceans.
 - This shift occurred at a rate of 4.36 cm per year, challenging previous climate models that primarily focused on ice sheet melting.
- Most of the world's oceans experience an increase of near 10 mm, but there was a sea level drop observed over the Indian and the Pacific Ocean adjacent to regions of groundwater depletion in Northwestern India and western North America.

About Motion of Earth

- Earth has two types of motions: rotation and revolution.
- Rotation is the movement of Earth around its axis, while revolution is the movement of Earth around the sun in a fixed orbit.
- Earth's axis is an imaginary line that is tilted at an angle of $66\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ to its orbit.
 - Effects of the Earth's Inclination
 - Day and night occur due to Earth's rotation, while seasons change because of its revolution.
 - It also causes variations in heat distribution, creating seasons and climate zones.

Union Government notified Second Phase of PM E-DRIVE Scheme

Recently, Union Ministry of Heavy Industries has notified partial modifications in the PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM EDRIIVE) Scheme to allow subsidy benefits for L5 category electric 3-wheelers.

Key Highlights of the Notification

- Incentive Per Vehicle:
 - April 1, 2024 – November 7, 2024: ₹5,000/kWh (capped at ₹50,000 per vehicle).
 - November 8, 2024 – March 31, 2026: ₹2,500/kWh (capped at ₹25,000 per vehicle).
- Maximum ex-factory price to avail incentive: ₹5 lakh.
- Fund Allocation: ₹715 crore.

About PM E-DRIVE Scheme

- Objective: To expedite the adoption of EVs by providing upfront incentives for their purchase, as well as by facilitating the establishment of essential charging infrastructure for EVs.
- Time Period: 2024-26.
- Targets
 - Support e-2Ws, e-3Ws, and e-buses.
 - Installation of fast chargers for e-4Ws, e-buses, and e-2W/3Ws.
- Nodal Ministry: Union Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- 3 Components
 - Subsidies: Demand Incentives for e-2W, e-3W, e-ambulances, e-trucks and other new emerging EV categories;
 - Grants for creation of capital assets: e-buses, establishment of network of charging stations & upgradation of testing agencies of MHI; and
 - Administration of the Scheme including IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities and fee for project management agency (PMA).

Centre announced “funding and mentorship” for winners of 'Tomato Grand Challenge (TGC)'
TGC seeks innovative, scalable solutions to stabilize the tomato supply chain.

- It was launched in 2023 by the Department of Consumer Affairs in collaboration with Ministry of Education (Innovation Cell).
- Tomatoes, along with Onions and Potatoes (collectively referred as (TOPs) have seen huge fluctuations in agriculture commodities among all crops.

About TOPs

- TOPs are the largest cultivated, produced, and consumed vegetables in India.
- TOPs make up more than a third of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) vegetables category.

Issues associated with wide fluctuation of TOPs prices

- Seasonal production: Lean seasons cause supply shortages and high prices, while bumper harvests result in low prices.
- Natural Factors: Weather shocks and pest attacks exacerbate volatility.
- Storage Accessibility: Limited storage facilities (mostly privately owned) which are concentrated in a few states including U.P, Punjab, West Bengal, Gujarat (CII report).
- Unorganised Market: Lack of robust networks like milk cooperatives to seamlessly connect producers to consumers for TOP.
- Issues in implementing Operation Greens: Diverse varieties of TOPs and growing conditions complicate marketing interventions.

Initiatives for Price stabilisation of TOP

- Operation Greens: It was launched on the lines of Operation Flood to address price volatility of TOPs and it was extended to other fruits & vegetables (TOP to TOTAL).
- Gramin Agricultural Markets (GRAMs): Rural haats (village markets) are being developed into Gramin Agricultural Markets (GRAMs) for farmers to directly sell their produce
- Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH): For holistic development of horticulture and assists with a low-cost onion storage structure.
- Other initiatives: Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI) for rural godowns, Kisan Rail service, Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF), etc.

The 2024 OPCW The Hague Award conferred upon Indian Chemical Council (ICC)

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Hague award acknowledges ICC contributions to chemical safety, compliance with Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC).

- This is the first time that the Award recognises the efforts of a chemical industry body.
- Hague Award was established in 2014 to honor OPCW's contributions to Chemical Weapons Conventions (CWC) goals.

About Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC)

- Genesis: It came into force in 1997, and presently has 193 States Parties.
 - India is an original signatory to the Convention.
- Aim: To eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States Parties.
- Implementation: OPCW is the implementing body, with a mission to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.
 - OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013.
 - Chemical Weapon is a chemical used to cause intentional death or harm through its toxic properties.
 - Munitions, devices and other equipment specifically designed to weaponise toxic chemicals also fall under the definition of chemical weapons.
- Implementation in India: National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC) is the national responsible for implementing the Convention in India.
 - NACWC was established under the Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000.

About Indian Chemical Council (ICC)

- About: Apex national body representing all branches of India's chemical industry, including organic/inorganic chemicals, plastics, and petrochemicals.
- Genesis: Founded in 1938 to support and drive the growth of India's chemical industry.
- Industry Representation: Represents over 80% of India's \$220 billion chemical industry.

Recently, the 'Martyrdom Day' of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji was observed on November 24.

About Guru Tegh Bahadur ji (1621 - 1675)

- He was born in Amritsar (Punjab).
- He was the 9th Sikh Guru and was a great warrior, spiritual personality and lover of the motherland.

Key Contributions

- He propagated the message of universal brotherhood and religious freedom.
- He fought against superstitions, caste-based discrimination, and untouchability.
 - His teachings inspire to build a strong and vibrant India which is firm on the pillars of equality, justice, fraternity and liberty
- He founded the town of Chak Nanki in Punjab, later enlarged into the city of Shri Anandpur Sahib.
- He was crowned with the rare honour of 'Hind Di Chadar'.

Values

- Valour, Spirituality, Leadership, Determination, etc.