

# NEWS TODAY

## IMPACTS OF PLASTIC POLLUTION ON FRESHWATER AQUATIC, TERRESTRIAL AND AVIAN MIGRATORY SPECIES

- Report is the result of collaboration between **Conservation of Migratory Species and the UN Environment Programme** as part of the **Japan-funded Counter MEASURE II project** to identify sources and pathways of plastic pollution in river systems in Asia.

➤ It identifies the impacts of plastic pollution on land and freshwater migratory species **protected by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)**.

### Key highlights

- Study noted that **53 million tonnes of plastic could enter aquatic systems annually by 2030**, which could eventually increase to 90 million tonnes.
- Report highlighted case study of **Ganges and Irrawaddy dolphins, dugong or sea cow, Asian elephants and various avian species** that were adversely impacted.
- **Major threats highlighted by report include** - Entanglement in plastic waste such as fishing nets; ingestion of plastic impacting food web; Space constraint and hindrance for species living on air-water interface owing to plastic waste etc.
- Migratory birds such as the **Black-faced Spoonbill and the Osprey** had been observed making nests out of plastics, often resulting in the entanglement of their chicks.



### ○ About CMS or Bonn Convention, 1979

- It is an **environmental treaty of the United Nations** to promote cooperation and action for species and habitat conservation.
- Species of conservation need are listed within Appendices I and II.
  - » **Appendix I** species are those that are threatened with extinction.
  - » **Appendix II** species are those that would benefit from international cooperation for their conservation.

## UNSC RESOLUTION ADDRESSES 'KEY CONCERNS' ON AFGHANISTAN: INDIA

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted the **UNSC Resolution 2593** with **India as the chair and sponsored by France, UK and US** with 13 members voting in favour, none against.

➤ **Concerns shared by Russia and China** (abstained from voting) included that **groups, especially Islamic State (ISIL) and the Uighur East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) were not named** specifically in the document.

### Key points of resolution

- **Afghan territory not be used to threaten or attack any country** or to shelter and train terrorists and plan or finance terrorist attacks.
- **Specifically mentions individuals designated by the UNSC resolution 1267** which includes the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).
- However, the resolution **did not condemn the grouping**.

- India played an active role in ensuring the passage of Resolution that **brought international pressure on state actors in Afghanistan and highlighted specifically the role of LeT and JeM**.

➤ India began **its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC** in January 2021 (India's eight term) and was president for the month of August.

## STRUCTURE OF UNSC

Permanent members, veto rights (5)

■ China, France, Russia, UK, USA

Non-permanent members, two-year terms (10)

■ Africa (3)

■ Asia (2)

■ Latin America (2)

■ Western Europe and others (2)

■ Eastern Europe (1)

• The Security Council has the primary responsibility within the UN of maintaining international peace and security

• It is the only United Nations organ that has the power to make decisions that member states are obligated to implement

# CHINA OPENS FIRST ROAD RAIL TRANSPORT LINK VIA MYANMAR TO INDIAN OCEAN

- The transport corridor **involves a sea-road-rail link**.
  - In this way, **China is now connected to Singapore via Myanmar**.
  - This is the **easiest way to connect southwest China to the Indian Ocean**.
- **Concern for India**
  - China's **direct access to the Bay of Bengal (BoB) is a major threat to India**.
    - **Andaman and Nicobar Islands also come along** the way China wants to trade with South East Asian countries.
    - **The Indian Ocean sea lines of communication (SLOCs)** are important for many Asian countries because it is **both an energy and trade corridor**.
  - Also, the current move of China is being seen as a part of China's **String of Pearl policy to encircle India**.
    - Chinese ships can pass through the BoB on a large scale. With this they **can easily keep an eye on the Indian islands**.
    - This can also **increase insurgency in Northeast India**.
- In a related development, **Japan has sought fresh hike in military budget to counter China**. Since last year, Japan has identified China as **its main national security threat**.



## SAND AND DUST STORMS IMPACT OVER 500 MILLION IN INDIA: APDIM

- The Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) published the report '**Sand and Dust Storms Risk Assessment in Asia and the Pacific**'.

- **APDIM is a regional institution of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)**.



- **Sand and dust storms** occur frequently in **deserts and semi-deserts** when strong winds detach small particles from dry soils with little or no vegetation cover.

- **Key findings**

- **'East and northeast Asia', 'south and southwest Asia', 'central Asia' and the 'Pacific'** are the four main **sand and dust storm corridors** of Asia-Pacific.
- **Energy loss** due to sand and dust storms **amounted to over \$107 million for India per year**.
- Much of such dust is characterised by **high salt content, making it toxic for plants**.
- **Very high dust deposition at 'third pole'** (Himalaya-Hindu Kush mountain range).
- **Positive impact**
  - They can increase the nutrient content in the areas of deposition and benefit vegetation.
  - Dust particles that carry iron can enrich parts of oceans, **improving the phytoplankton balance and impacting marine food webs**.

## NINE NEW SUPREME COURT JUDGES, INCLUDING 3 WOMEN APPOINTED

- This will be for the **first time in the history of the Supreme Court** when **nine judges** would be taking the oath of office in one go.
  - This would take the **strength of the Supreme Court to 33 out of the sanctioned strength of 34**.
- **Women in Judiciary**
  - In the **last over 71 years SC** has appointed **only eight women judges** starting from **M Fathima Beevi in 1989**.
  - Justice Indira Banerjee is the lone serving woman judge in the top court after her elevation on August 7, 2018.
- **Challenges to women's entry**
  - **Major barrier to women's recruitment as district judges are the eligibility criteria** to take the entrance exams.
    - Lawyers need to have seven years of continuous legal practice and be in the age bracket of 35-45.
    - This is a disadvantage for women as many are married by this age.
    - **Further, the long and inflexible work hours in law, combined with familial responsibilities**, force many women to drop out of practice and they **fail to meet the requirement of continuous practice**.

- **Significance of gender parity in judiciary**

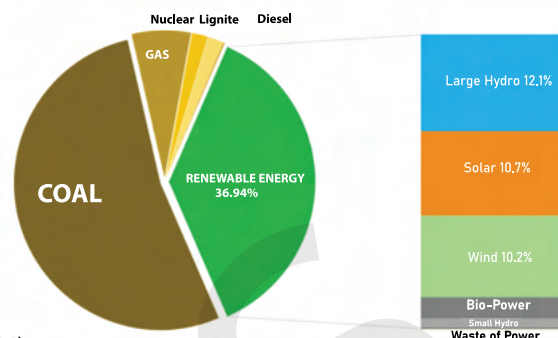
- Positive step in the direction of judiciary being **perceived as being more transparent, inclusive, and representative** of the people whose lives they affect.
- **Women judges bring those lived experiences to their judicial actions**, experiences that tend toward a more comprehensive and empathetic perspective.

# INDIA ADDS 4.5 GW SOLAR CAPACITY IN 2021, SURPASSES 2020

- In the first half of 2021, **India added 4.5 GW of solar capacity, against 3.2 GW in whole of last year** implying the pace picked up by the solar sector.
  - Earlier, **share of solar power in India's installed power capacity mix reached 10.3%, exceeding that of wind-based power sources** for the first time.
- Government initiatives to promote solar energy**
  - National Solar Mission.
  - Solar Transfiguration of India (SRISTI)** scheme to promote rooftop solar power projects in India.
  - Suryamitra** programme to prepare qualified workforce.
  - Developments of solar parks and ultra-mega solar power projects.**
  - Grid connected solar rooftop programme**
  - Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan Yojana (PM-KUSUM).
  - Atal Jyoti Yojana (AJAY)
  - Renewable purchase obligation** for large energy consumer customers.
- International Initiatives**
  - International Solar Alliance (ISA)** - Launched by India and France to address energy needs of 121 solar resource-rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members.
    - One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG)** initiative was proposed by India at the ISA forum.

India - Cumulative Installed Power Capacity Mix (%)

Renewables (including Large Hydro) comprise ~37% of India's total installed capacity, with solar accounting for ~11%. Among renewables, solar accounts for ~29% of the installed capacity



## ALSO IN NEWS

<p><b>Mission 5000</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective of the 'Mission 5,000' is to ensure <b>effective parliamentary democracy</b>.</li> <li>On the occasion of the <b>75<sup>th</sup> year of Independence</b>, the <b>Vice President appealed to all the 5,000 legislators</b> of our country to resolve not to disrupt the proceedings of legislatures during the year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Web portal launched for New Industrial Development Scheme for Jammu &amp; Kashmir (J&amp;K IDS, 2021)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a <b>Central Sector Scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 28,400 crore</b> upto the year 2037.</li> <li>Scheme aims to take <b>industrial development to the block level in UT of J&amp;K, which is first time, any Industrial Incentive Scheme</b> of the Government of India.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis is <b>on job creation, skill development and sustainable development</b>.</li> <li>It offers <b>Capital Investment Incentive, Capital Interest subvention, GST Linked Incentive and Working Capital Interest Incentive</b> for both smaller and larger units.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>GDP data by National Statistical Office (NSO)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) <b>grew by a stellar 20.1% in the first quarter of 2021-22</b>, compared with the <b>24.4% contraction</b> recorded in the corresponding quarter a year ago.</li> <li>The numbers are reflective of <b>low base effect</b> as in the June quarter last year, the <b>economy had shrunk massively owing to the nationwide lockdown</b>.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low base effect in economics is the <b>tendency of a small absolute change from a low initial amount</b> to be translated into a large percentage change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Scrub typhus</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uttar Pradesh has reported many cases of a <b>mystery fever</b>, which has been identified as <b>scrub typhus</b>.</li> <li>According to <b>Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</b>, scrub typhus is a disease <b>caused by bacteria</b> called <b>Orientia tsutsugamushi</b>.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is also known as <b>bush typhus</b>.</li> <li>Infection spreads to people through <b>bites of infected chiggers (larval mites)</b>.</li> <li>Symptoms include fever and chills, headache, body aches, rashes and muscle pain.</li> <li><b>No vaccine is available</b> to prevent scrub typhus. The <b>antibiotic doxycycline can be used</b> to treat the person.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



 <p><b>Five-minute yoga protocol</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been developed by the Ministry of Ayush.</li> <li>The five-minute protocol intends to introduce people at the workplace to yoga. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; It <b>promotes the idea of a break of five minutes from the work schedule to practice yoga to refresh, de-stress and re-focus.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>Also, the <b>Y-Break mobile application</b> has been developed by MDNIY (Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga) through which yoga and meditation can be done anywhere in just 5 minutes.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Places in News</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Odisha's Kendrapara</b> is now <b>India's only district to have all 3 species of crocodilians - salt-water, gharial and mugger.</b></li> <li><b>Kendrapara</b> district is <b>crisscrossed by rivers, creeks, water inlets</b> and claimed fame for its successful conservation programme for salt-water or estuarine crocodiles at the Bhitarkanika National Park.</li> <li><b>All 3 species are protected under</b> Schedule 1 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and Appendix 1 of CITES.</li> <li><b>IUCN status of crocodiles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>Saltwater</b>- Least Concern</li> <li>&gt; <b>Gharial</b>- Critical Endangered</li> <li>&gt; <b>Mugger</b>- Vulnerable</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 
 <p><b>Personality in news</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada</b></li> <li>A <b>special commemorative Rs. 125 coin</b> will be released by the Indian Prime Minister on the occasion of the <b>125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary.</b></li> <li>In 1959, he took a vow of renunciation (sannyasa) and started writing commentaries on <b>Vaishnava scriptures.</b></li> <li>He became <b>prominent communicator of Gaudiya Vaishnava (school of Hinduism) theology</b> to India and especially to the West through his leadership of ISKCON, founded in 1966. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) is commonly known as the <b>"Hare Krishna movement"</b>.</li> <li>&gt; The focus of Gaudiya Vaishnavism is the <b>devotional worship (bhakti yoga)</b> of Radha and Krishna.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



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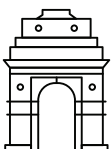
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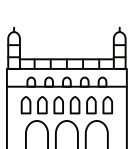
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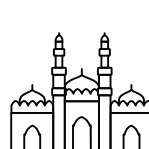
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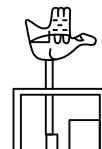
HYDERABAD



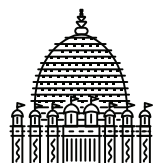
PUNE



AHMEDABAD



CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI