

NEWS TODAY

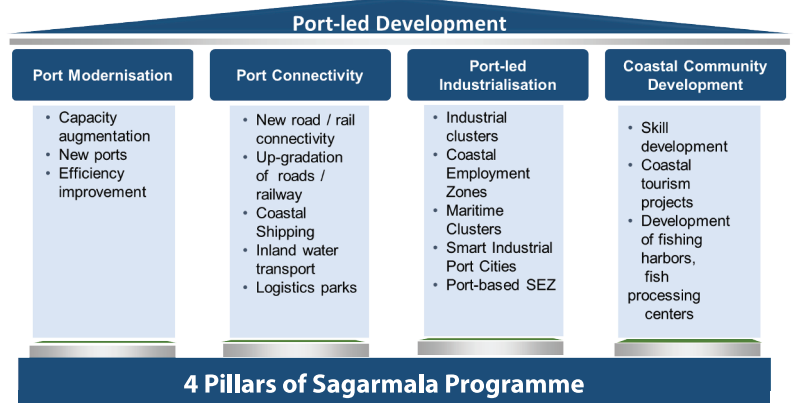
MORADABAD 2ND MOST NOISE POLLUTED CITY GLOBALLY, SAYS UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

- UNEP 'Frontiers' report 2022: **Noise, Blazes and Mismatches** looks at three concerns: Urban soundscapes, wildfires and phonological shifts.
- **Key findings**
 - 13 noise polluted cities in south Asia. Five of these are in India, namely Moradabad, Kolkata, Asansol, Jaipur and Delhi.
 - Long-term exposure to noise pollution from road traffic, railways, or leisure activities causes **premature deaths, heart disease, metabolic disorders, and people suffer from irritability.**
 - Highest noise pollution has been recorded in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- **Steps taken to deal with noise pollution**
 - Earlier, it was covered under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981** but later, **Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000** replaced it.
 - However, under **Air Act, 1981**, noise emanating from industry is regulated by State Pollution Control Boards / Pollution Control Committees (SPCBs / PCCs) for states/UTs.
 - **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) proposed fines** between Rs 1,000 and Rs 1 lakh for those who violate norms.
 - **Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 prescribed** noise standards for motor vehicles, air-conditioners, refrigerators etc.
- **Steps that can be taken: Vegetation** in urban environments, **Noise barriers** along highways or railways, conducting awareness campaigns etc.
 - Noise pollution is defined as **regular exposure to elevated sound levels that may lead to adverse effects in humans or other living organisms.**
 - CPCB has laid down the **permissible noise pollution levels** in India for different areas.



SAGARMALA- SEVEN YEARS OF SPECTACULAR SUCCESS

- Launched in **2015**, Sagarmala programme is the **flagship programme of Ministry of Shipping to promote port-led development through harnessing India's 7,500 km long coastline**, 14500 km of potentially navigable waterways and strategic location on key international maritime trade routes.
 - Its **core vision is to reduce the logistics cost for EXIM and domestic trade** with minimal infrastructure investment.
- **Achievements and initiatives:**
 - **Quality service delivery has reduced Turnaround Time (containers) at Ports** to 26.58 hours from 44.70 hours in 2013-14.
 - **Current cargo handling capacity of Indian ports improved to 1,500 Million Tonnes Per Year (MMTPA)** from 1,052 MMTPA in FY2014-15.
 - **Improved ports' efficiency and Ease of Doing Business through Creating Smart Ports** (Logistics Data Bank Service; RFID Solutions etc); **Digitization in Services; Smooth Data Flow etc.**
 - **Port-led industrialization to boost industrial and export growth** along the coastline to be **realized through 14 Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs).**
 - **Skilling of Coastal population:** Under Deen Dayal Upadhyay- Grameen Kaushalya Yojna Sagarmala Convergence Programme, more than 1900 candidates trained.
 - More than **one crore employment opportunities** to be created.

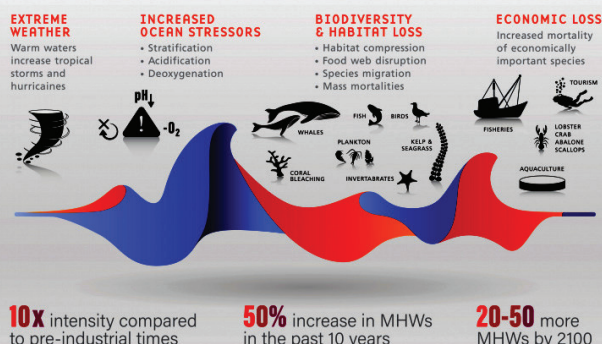


TROPICAL INDIAN OCEAN WARMED BY 1°C CELSIUS FROM 1951-2015

- As per information released by government in Parliament, the **tropical Indian Ocean has experienced a rapid increase in ocean warming** with an average rise in **sea surface temperature (SST)** of about **1 °C** over the period of 1951-2015, 0.15°C per decade.
- Western Indian Ocean region experienced a four-fold rise in marine heatwaves events** (increasing at rate of 1.5 events per decade) while **north Bay of Bengal experienced a two-to-three fold rise** (0.5 events per decade).
 - A marine heatwave (MHW) is defined **when seawater temperatures exceed a seasonally-varying threshold** (usually the 90th percentile) for at least 5 consecutive days.
- Causes of MHW over Indian Ocean:**
 - Background ocean warming in the Indian Ocean** and also in response to **El Niño events in the Pacific Ocean**.
 - Locally, a peak in solar radiation and a dip in evaporative cooling** due to weak winds.
 - In the western Indian Ocean, the weak winds also **reduce the heat transported by ocean currents from the near equatorial region towards the north**, intensifying the MHW.
- Impacts:**
 - Reduction in monsoon rainfall over Central India.**
 - Enhancement of monsoon rain over the South Peninsular region.**

MARINE HEATWAVES

MHW are extended periods of regional ocean warming. They have major impacts on marine life and human society.



NITI AAYOG RELEASES SECOND EDITION OF EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX (EPI) 2021

- EPI, prepared by **NITI Aayog in partnership with Institute of Competitiveness**, is a **comprehensive** analysis of India's export achievements of states and union territories and identifies challenges and opportunities.
- EPI is a **data-driven endeavour to identify fundamental areas** critical for subnational export promotion.
 - EPI ranks states and UTs on **4 main pillars—Policy; Business Ecosystem; Export Ecosystem; Export Performance** and **11 sub-pillars**. (refer infographic)

Key findings

Most of the 'Coastal States' are best performers, with Gujarat as top-performer, followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu.

States with higher exports also experience **high Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)**.

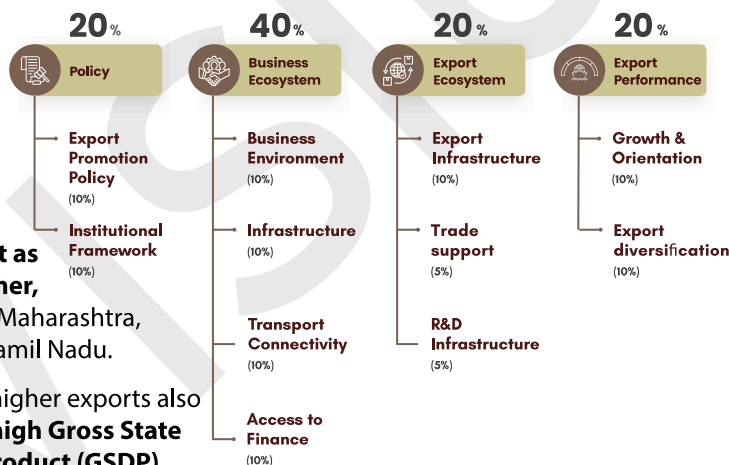
Among landlocked states, Haryana emerged as a best performer followed by Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Punjab.

Significance

- Instil competition** among states to bring favourable policies.
- Ease the **regulatory framework** to prompt subnational export promotion.
- Assist in identifying strategic recommendations for improving export competitiveness.

Three major challenges to India's export promotion are

- Intra- and inter-regional differences in export infrastructure.**
- Weak trade support** and growth orientation across states.
- Lack of R&D infrastructure** to promote complex and unique exports.



THE GSAT 7B AND INDIA'S OTHER MILITARY SATELLITES

- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, key procurement panel chaired by Defence Minister, has **accorded Acceptance of Necessity** (first step of procurement) for the indigenously designed, developed and built GSAT 7B.
 - Proposed to be launched in next 2-3 years, **GSAT 7B will be a state-of-the-art, multiband, military-grade satellite** for the Army.
 - It will act as a **force multiplier and fail-safe communication support** to the force as it moves deeper into network-centric warfare scenario.
- GSAT 7 series satellites are **advanced geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO) satellites** developed by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to **meet the communication needs of the defence services**.
 - GSAT 7 satellite (launched 2013) is used by Indian Navy while GSAT 7A (2018) is designed for Indian Air Force.
 - Currently, the Army is using 30%** of the communication capabilities of the GSAT 7A.
- Other military satellites of India:**
 - Electromagnetic Intelligence Gathering Satellite (EMISAT):** Has an **Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) package called Kautilya**, allowing interception of ground-based radar and carries out electronic surveillance across India.
 - RISAT 2BR1 synthetic aperture radar imaging satellite:** Capability to operate in different modes including very high resolution imaging modes.

RBI SETS FRAMEWORK FOR GEO-TAGGING OF PAYMENT SYSTEM OPERATORS

- As per the framework, **banks and non-bank payment system operators (PSOs)** will capture and maintain **geographical coordinates** (latitude and longitude) for all payment touch points.
 - They will maintain a **registry with accurate location** of all payment touch points across the country, including **merchant related information and payment acceptance infrastructure** details.
 - Geo-tagging information would be **submitted to the RBI for PoS (Points of Sale) terminals** (including mobile PoS, soft PoS, tablet PoS, desktop PoS etc) and **Paper-based / Soft QR Codes** (Bharat QR, UPI QR, etc.).
- About Geo-tagging:**
 - It refers to **capturing the geographical coordinates (latitude and longitude) of payment touch points deployed** by merchants to receive payments from their customers.
- Benefits:**
 - Will enable **proper monitoring** of availability of **payment acceptance infrastructure** like PoS terminals, Quick Response (QR) codes.
 - Provide insights on **regional penetration** of digital payments and **infrastructure density** across different locations.
 - Will support **policy intervention to optimise distribution** of payment infrastructure.
 - Help in identifying **scope for deploying additional payment touch point** and in facilitating **focused digital literacy** programmes.

ALSO IN NEWS



National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)

- India's drug pricing authority has allowed a **price hike of 10.7% for scheduled drugs**-which will result in rise in price for over 800 drugs under the **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)**.
- About NLEM:**
 - Health Ministry** draws up a NLEM.
 - All **essential medicines**, defined under NLEM, are treated as **scheduled formulations** under **Drug Price Control Order, 2013**.
- Related news**
 - Government recently informed that under **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**, more than **8,600 Jana-aushadhi Kendras** are **functional** across the country.
 - PMBJP is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, to provide** quality medicines at affordable prices **to the masses through Jana-aushadhi Kendra**.



MERCOSUR

- India is **looking to sign long-term contracts with MERCOSUR countries to import crude sunflower oil** as Russia's invasion of Ukraine has disrupted imports, leading to skyrocketing edible oil prices.
 - For this, **India may need to reduce the import duty on sunflower oil** originating from Mercosur countries and **do away with the stringent testing requirements under the existing preferential tariff agreement (PTA)** with the grouping, signed in 2004.
- Established in 1991, **MERCOSUR is the Latin American trading bloc with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay** as its members.



Pure time preference theory

- It is an **economic theory that seeks to explain the phenomenon of interest**.
 - It was **given by an American economist Frank Fetter** in 20th century through his book '**The Principles of Economics**'.
 - It states that interest arises when **present goods are exchanged for future goods** because people, considering all other things being equal, prefer present goods over future goods.
- If an individual prefers immediate consumption over future consumption, he is said to possess high **time-preference and vice versa for low time-preference**.



Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)

- Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE)** under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) signed a MoU with the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) to enhance the impact of **Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)**.
 - It is a sub scheme of the **National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)**.
- Objectives:**
 - Promoting **employment opportunities** in rural India, particularly developing **self-employment avenues** for unemployed rural people.
 - Develop **local resources** by training a pool of village level Cadre of **Community Resource Persons-Enterprise Promotion (CRP-EP)**.



Partnership between AIM and Her&Now

- NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) & GIZ Project Her&Now** join hands to end gender-based barriers for Women Entrepreneurs across India.
 - Partnership between AIM and Her&Now will impart '**WINcubate Training Programme**' to AIM Incubators and Innovation Centres and equip them in adopting gender-focused approach.
- WINcubate Training Programme has been developed by Her&Now together with Indian NGO Dhriiti – the Courage Within** and is based on best practices of women entrepreneurship support programmes implemented in the country since 2019.

 <p>eSanjeevani</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eSanjeevani telemedicine service of Union Health Ministry has crossed 3 crore tele-consultations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Telemedicine service platforms 'e-Sanjeevani' and 'e-Sanjeevani OPD' were developed in 2019 by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC). • eSanjeevani is a doctor-to-doctor telemedicine system, deployed nationally under Ayushman Bharat Scheme of Government of India. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aims to carry out teleconsultation in all 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres in a 'Hub and Spoke' model.
 <p>Prasthan (Offshore Security exercise)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Naval Command conducted 'Prasthan' in the Offshore Development Area (ODA) off Mumbai.
 <p>Mysuru Declaration-2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Declaration, universities would draw up strategies for achieving their targets for the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and share their best practices through the network of AIU (Association of Indian Universities) for attainment of SDGs. • SDGs were adopted by UN in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.
 <p>Rough-Toothed Dolphin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Research team of the Department of Environment and Forest in Lakshadweep has reported the first-ever live sighting of rough-toothed dolphins (<i>Steno bredanensis</i>) in Indian waters. • About Rough-Toothed Dolphin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Found in tropical and warmer temperate waters all over the world but little is known about them. ➤ Grow up to 8.5ft in length and have grey body with white lips and throat and a speckled belly. • Conservation status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IUCN: Least Concern. ➤ CITES Appendix II.

