

NEWS TODAY

FOURTH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP4) TO THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY BEING HELD IN BALI, INDONESIA

- **MC on Mercury**, adopted in 2013 at Geneva, is the world's **first legally binding treaty to protect human health and environment** from adverse effects of mercury.

- It is named after the city in Japan that became the epicenter of Minamata disease, a neurological disease caused by severe mercury poisoning, in the 1950s.
- **India signed the MC in 2014 and ratified in 2018.**
- **It came into force in 2017.**

- At the meeting, Indonesia as well as the United Nations have introduced a global declaration that calls on parties to the **Minamata Convention (MC) on Mercury to tackle global illegal trade of mercury.**

- **Non-binding declaration calls upon parties to**

- **Develop practical tools and notification and information-sharing systems** for monitoring and managing trade in mercury.
- **Exchange experiences and practices relating to combating illegal trade** in mercury, including reducing use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

- **Other conventions**

- **Rotterdam - For certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade.**
- **Basel- Control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal.**
- **Vienna- Protection of Ozone Layer.**
- **Stockholm- Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).**

○ Mercury considered by WHO as one of the top ten chemicals or groups of chemicals of major public health concern.

➤ It may have **toxic effects on nervous, digestive and immune systems, lungs, kidneys, skin and eyes.**

➤ India is second-largest user of mercury in world after US.



STATE LEGISLATURES HAVE POWER TO TAX LOTTERIES ORGANIZED BY OTHER STATES: SC

- The judgement came on appeals filed by Karnataka and Kerala governments and set aside the orders of their respective High Courts which held that **they lacked legislative competence to levy tax on lotteries.**

- **Issues involved**

- Whether "betting and gambling" include "lotteries" and whether States have the competence to tax them as per Entry 62 of Indian Constitution.
- Whether Entry 40 of List I restricts the power of States to levy tax on lotteries organized by other states.

- **SC observation**

- **Lotteries come within ambit of 'betting and gambling'** as appearing in **state subject** under **Entry 34 List II of Seventh Schedule.**
- Lotteries, except those organized by the Government of India or Government of a State covered under Entry 40 List I, come within State subject.
- **Entry 40 of List I does not take away the power of States to levy tax on other-state lotteries.**
 - Court observed **that in case of an apparent overlapping between two Entries, the doctrine of pith and substance has to be applied** to find out the true nature of a legislation and the Entry within which it would fall.

○ **According to Finance Act, 1994 act** "Betting or Gambling" means putting on stake something of value, particularly money, with consciousness of risk and hope of gain on the outcome of a game or a contest, whose result may be determined by chance or accident, or on the likelihood of anything occurring or not occurring.

○ Lottery is enumerated under **Entry 40 of List I of Seventh Schedule and governed by Lotteries (Regulation) Act.**

MEETING BETWEEN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER OF INDIA AND OMAN HELD

- India and Oman agreed to finalise negotiations for a **bilateral protocol on investment and avoidance of double taxation at an early date.**
 - They also agreed to pursue opportunities in areas such as **renewable energy, green hydrogen etc.**
- India Oman Relations**
 - Political relations:** Oman is a strategic partner of India in the Gulf and an **important interlocutor at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Arab League and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) fora.**
 - Diplomatic relations were established in 1955** and the **relationship was upgraded to Strategic partnership in 2008.**
 - Defence:** It is the **only country in the Gulf region with which all three services** of the Indian armed forces conduct regular bilateral exercises.
 - Oman also provides **critical operational support to Indian naval deployments** in Arabian sea for anti-piracy missions.
 - Strategic:** India has secured **access to Oman's Port of Duqm for military use and logistical support** as part of its strategy to counter Chinese influence in the region.
 - Economic and commercial:** For Oman, India was 3rd largest source for its imports and 3rd largest market for Oman's crude oil exports in 2019.



INDIA ACHIEVED ITS AMBITIOUS TARGET OF CROSSING \$400 BILLION EXPORTS

- For the first time ever, India achieved the target that it had set for exports** marking a key milestone for Atmanirbhar Bharat journey.

- Key drivers of export growth included **petroleum products (147.6%), engineering goods (49.7%), electronics goods (42.8%) and gems and jewellery (57.3%).**

- Reasons for such expansion include**

➤ Demand side

- **Pent up demand** that was not met during major waves of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Expansionary monetary policy by developed economies** in response to the economic impact of the pandemic.

➤ Supply Side

- **Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-20** was extended till 2022.
- **Niryat Bandhu Scheme** was launched to reach out to the new and potential exporters.
- **Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)** and **Market Access Initiatives (MAI) Scheme** were launched to provide assistance.
- A comprehensive **"Agriculture Export Policy"** was launched.
- **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP)** scheme and **Rebate of State and Central Levies and Taxes (RoSCTL)** Scheme.
- Enhancing role of **Indian missions abroad towards promoting India's trade, tourism etc.**



NASA PROVIDES UPDATE TO ASTRONAUT MOON LANDER PLANS UNDER ARTEMIS

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) rolled out its **ARTEMIS I moon mission** to the launchpad for testing at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, United States.

- ARTEMIS program** means Acceleration, Reconnection, Turbulence and Electrodynamics of Moon's Interaction with the Sun. **It is divided into three parts.**

- Artemis I involves an **uncrewed flight to test Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and Orion spacecraft.**

- Artemis II will be the **first crewed flight test and is targetted for 2023.**

- Artemis III will land astronauts on the Moon's South Pole in 2024.

- With this program, NASA aims to **land humans on the moon by 2024**, and **contribute to scientific discovery and economic benefits** and inspire a new generation of explorers.

- Also, **demonstrates new technologies, capabilities and business** approaches that will ultimately be needed for the future exploration of Mars.

- Elements involved in going to moon are – **exploration ground systems** (the structures on the ground that are required to support the launch), **SLS, Orion** (the spacecraft for lunar missions), **Gateway** (the lunar outpost around the Moon), **lunar landers** (modern human landing systems) and the **Artemis generation spacesuits.**

○ Other Moon exploration

- Soviet Union- **Uncrewed Luna 1 and 2**, first rover to visit moon.
- US- Apollo 11 mission
- Japan- SELENE
- China- Chang'e-4 lunar probe.
- India- Chandrayaan
- Israel- Baresheet aircraft

LESS THAN A QUARTER OF TARGET VILLAGES GOT SOLID, LIQUID WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE THIS YEAR: PARLIAMENTARY PANEL

Key highlights of the report

- **Poor target achievement under Swachh Bharat Mission** - According to the report, implementation of solid and liquid waste management (SLWM) infrastructure which was to be taken up under second phase of SBM lagged behind in the country.
 - **Only 22% of target villages covered under Solid Waste Management and 12% under Liquid Waste Management.**
- **Under Jal Jeevan Mission** which aims to bring potable tap water to all rural homes by 2024, **the committee slammed the government for low fund utilisation.**
 - While ₹50,011 crore was allocated in the Budget, the actual expenditure incurred so far is only ₹28,238 crore.
- **Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM)** is the **collection, transportation, processing, recycling, treatment, and disposal of waste material** in a scientific manner.
 - **SLWM** is one of the key components of SBM- Gramin, launched with the objective of **bringing improvement in cleanliness, hygiene and the general quality of life in rural areas.**
 - **Gram Panchayat functionaries would be responsible** for design, implementation, operation and maintenance (O&M) of SLWM systems with support from respective state governments.



ALSO IN NEWS

<p>Marital Rape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a recent judgement, Karnataka HC has highlighted that Rape is rape, even if man is husband. • About Marital Rape- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presently, it is not penalised in India. ➤ Section 375 (Exception) of the Indian penal Code (IPC) exempts unwilling sexual intercourse between a husband and a wife over fifteen years of age from Section 375's definition of "rape" and thus immunizes such acts from prosecution. • Legal provisions available to women. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Section 498A deals with women being subjected to cruelty. ➤ Domestic Violence Act, 2005 recognises forced sexual activity as punishable.
<p>Daylight saving time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US Senate approved the bill known as the Sunshine Protection Act of 2021. • It aims to make Daylight savings time (DST) permanent by scrapping the biannual practice of putting clocks forward and back coinciding with the arrival and departure of winter. • About DST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is the practice of moving the clocks forward one hour from Standard Time during the summer months and changing them back again in the fall. ➤ The general idea is that this allows us all to make better use of natural daylight, thus saving energy.
<p>National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre has set a target of about Rs 1 trillion for government-backed National Bank for Financial Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) for sanctioning loans to the infrastructure sector in the next financial year. • About NaBFID: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is principal development financial institution (DFIs) for infrastructure financing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ DFIs are set up for providing long-term finance where the risks involved are beyond the acceptable limits of commercial banks and other ordinary financial institutions. ➤ It will start operations in the first quarter of the next financial year.
<p>G20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founded in 1999, it is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. • Together, the G20 members represent more than 80% of world GDP, 75% of international trade and 60 percent of the world population. • Its objective is to discuss key issues in the global economy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is a member and is set to steer the body as President from 1st December 2022 to 30th November 2023. • It does not have a permanent secretariat or Headquarters.
 <p>League of Arab States (Arab League)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a UNSC meeting Indian foreign secretary called for greater policy alignment between the U.N. and the LAS (League of Arab States). • About League of Arab States or Arab League: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It is an intergovernmental organization (IGO), a voluntary association of independent African and Middle East countries whose peoples are mainly Arabic speaking. > Purpose: To strengthen ties among the member states, coordinate their policies, and promote their common interests. > Founded in 1945 > Headquarters: Cairo, Egypt
 <p>International Criminal Court (ICC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photojournalist Danish Siddiqui's parents file case against Taliban in ICC. • ICC is court of last resort for the prosecution of serious international crimes, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Governed by an international treaty called the Rome Statute, world's first permanent ICC. > It is an independent international organisation and is not part of the United Nations system. > Headquartered at The Hague in the Netherlands. Also has temporary field offices in areas where investigations are being conducted. > India has neither signed nor ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC.
 <p>Mekedatu dam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamil Nadu government has recently passed a resolution against move to build the dam. • About the Dam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > To be built across the Cauvery River by Karnataka as a reservoir and drinking water project. It will also recharge the aquifers in the region. > However, Tamil Nadu has been opposing the project as it violates the final award of the Cauvery River Water Tribunal of 2007 and SC judgement of 2018. > Also, the dam would disrupt the natural flow of water from the upper riparian state and affect its agrarian community. > The project is now before the Cauvery Water Management Authority.
 <p>Exoplanets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory confirmed that there are now 5,000 known planets beyond our solar system. • Planets that orbit around other stars are called exoplanets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Exoplanets are very hard to see directly with telescopes. > They are hidden by the bright glare of the stars they orbit. So, astronomers use other ways to detect and study these distant planets. > They search for exoplanets by looking at the effects these planets have on the stars they orbit.
 <p>Abel prize</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abel prize for 2022 goes to American mathematician Dennis P. Sullivan. • It is an international prize presented by King of Norway to one or more outstanding mathematicians. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It is named after 19th century Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel. > It was instituted in 2002, to commemorate his 200-th birth anniversary. > Prize consists of a citation and a prize money of 7.5 million Norwegian Kroner. > First Abel Prize was awarded in 2003. > It helps to raise the status of mathematics in society and to stimulate the interest of young people in mathematics.

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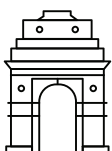
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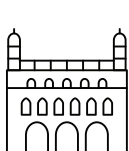
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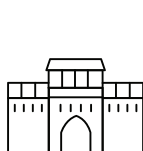
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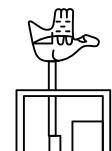
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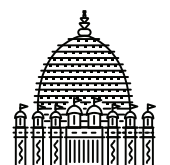
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