

# NEWS TODAY

## INDIA'S ARCTIC POLICY TITLED 'INDIA AND THE ARCTIC: BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT' RELEASED

- **Ministry of Earth Sciences** released India's Arctic Policy to enhance the country's cooperation with the resource-rich and rapidly transforming region.
- **Six Pillars of the policy**

Six Pillars of the policy					
Strengthening India's scientific research and cooperation	Climate and environmental protection	Economic and human development	Transportation and connectivity	Governance and international cooperation	National capacity building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthening the existing research base at Himadri.</li> <li>● Encourage research to align with <b>International arctic priorities</b>.</li> <li>● Channelise and harness existing expertise across disciplines such as <b>geoengineering, cold biology, and microbial diversity</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Engage with partners</b> to improve earth system modelling to support weather and climate predictions.</li> <li>● Contribute towards <b>environmental management</b> in Arctic.</li> <li>● Contribute towards environmental management in the <b>Arctic-methane emissions</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explore <b>opportunities for responsible exploration</b> of natural resources and minerals.</li> <li>● Identify <b>opportunities for investment</b> in Arctic infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaborate in the field of <b>ship building</b> with partners who have relevant expertise.</li> <li>● Promote <b>opportunities for Indian seafarers</b> to crew ships engaged in Arctic transits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve understanding of the <b>complex governance structures</b> in the Arctic</li> <li>● Actively participate in international <b>climate change and environmental treaty frameworks</b> relating to the Arctic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Strengthening institutional and human resource capacities</b>.</li> <li>● Build <b>indigenous capacity</b> in building ships of ice-class standards.</li> </ul>

- **Significance of Arctic:**
  - Changes in the Arctic, especially melting Arctic ice, can be **highly disruptive** for national development.
  - Synergies between polar studies and **Himalayas**.
  - Melting Arctic ice **opens up new opportunities** like energy exploration, mining, shipping etc.
  - India **holds one of the 13 positions** as the Observer in the Arctic Council.

### History of India's Arctic Research



## PM UJJWALA YOJANA (PMUY) REDUCED AIR POLLUTION DEATHS BY 13%, PREVENTED OVER 1.5 LAKH DEATHS IN 2019: STUDY

- An independent **impact assessment** of Ujjwala programme has found that:
  - PMUY helped in avoiding **at least 1.8 million tonnes of PM2.5 emissions** in 2019.
  - **Biomass burning in household cooking could be contributing 30-40%** of outdoor air pollution.
- **About PMUY**
  - It was launched in 2016 to **provide LPG connection to the rural and deprived households** that were using traditional fuels like wood, cow-dung cakes, or coal for cooking purposes.
  - It aims to **reduce premature deaths due to Indoor air pollution**.
  - **Ujjwala 2.0** was launched in 2021, with an aim to **provide deposit-free LPG connections to those low-income families** who could not be covered under the earlier phase of PMUY.
- **About Indoor air pollution:**
  - It refers to **chemical, biological and physical contamination** of indoor air.
  - WHO fact sheet on household air pollution due to indoor pollutants states that **3.8 million premature deaths occur annually**.
  - **Indoor pollutants recognised:** NOx, SO2, ozone (O3), CO, volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds (VOCs), PM, radon and microorganisms.
  - **Impacts:** Risks of stroke, ischaemic heart diseases, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, lung cancer.
  - **Other steps taken for Indoor air pollution:** Unnat Chulha Abhiyan, National Biomass Cookstoves Initiative, Promoting solar cookers, Neerdhur etc.

### Eligibility Criteria for PMUY

- An **adult woman belonging to a poor household** and not having LPG connection in her household, will be eligible under UJJWALA 2.0.
- The beneficiaries should belong to **any of the following categories:**
  - Eligible as per SECC 2011 list
  - Belongs to SC/ST households, be a beneficiary of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Forest dwellers, Most Backward Classes (MBC), Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes, People residing in riverlands.
  - If she is not falling in the above 2 categories, then she can stake her claim to be a beneficiary under Poor household by submitting 14-point declaration.

# DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN OF MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (DMP-MOPR) RELEASED

## • Objectives of DMP:

- To develop **disaster resilience at the grassroots level** among the Panchayats,
- Establish a **framework to align the disaster management measures** in rural areas to that of the National Disaster Management Authority.
- Convergence of actions to envision, plan and implement **community-based disaster management plans**.

## • Features of DMP-MoPR:

- Under it, **every Indian village would have a Village Disaster Management Plan (VDMP)** and **every Panchayat, a DMP**.
- **Incorporates many innovations in addition to being in compliance with Disaster Management Act 2005, National Disaster Management Policy 2009,** and guidelines issued by NDMA.
- **All stakeholders** including PRIs, elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayats etc. **would participate in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation** of the plan.

## • Importance of local government & community in DM

- **Use the local knowledge and resources**, and build on them in order to improve the capacity of the people to withstand the impact of disasters.
- **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) can be especially effective in enhancing people's responses to disasters by forming village-level disaster response committees**, organising early warning systems, rescue teams and diversified sources of livelihood.

# NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES (NCST) DYSFUNCTIONAL: PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

## • As per the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment report:

- NCST has **not delivered a single report to Parliament** in the last four years.
- Pending reports include a **study of the impact of Indira Sagar Polavaram Project (Andhra Pradesh) on the tribal population** and a **special report on rehabilitation and resettlement of displaced tribals** because of the Rourkela Steel Plant.


## • Key observations of Committee:

- **Lack of manpower:** As per the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), **recruitment in the Commission was constrained because of lack of applicants** as the eligibility bar was set too high.
- **Budgetary shortage:** At the Revised Estimate (RE) stage, **Budgetary allocations for MoTA were reduced** to ₹6126.46 cr (from ₹7,084.07 cr) in 2021-22.
- **MoTA could not spend fully** on the RE allocation in 2020-21.
- **States also could not utilise the amount** released to them by the Ministry.

## • Recommendations of Committee

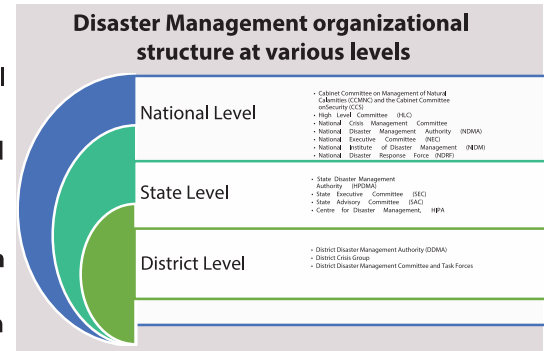
- **Budgetary allocation for the Commission needs to be reviewed** so that its functioning is not made to suffer for lack of funds.
- **Strive to achieve better coordination between the States and the implementing agencies** for full utilisation of the funds allotted to them.

**About NCST**



**National Commission for Scheduled Tribes**  
Government of India

- NCST was **established by amending Article 338** and inserting a **new Article 338A** through the **89th Constitution Amendment Act, 2003**.
- **Functions:**
  - **To investigate & Monitor matters relating to Safeguards provided for STs** under the Constitution or under other laws or under Govt. Order.
  - **To inquire into specific complaints relating to Rights & Safeguards** of STs
  - **To participate and Advise in the Planning Process relating to Socio-economic development of STs**, and to Evaluate their progress
  - **To discharge such other functions in relation to STs as the President may**, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify
- It is **vested with all the powers of Civil Court** while investigating any matter on inquiring into any complaint relating to deprivation of rights and safeguards for STs.



# FILM INDUSTRY MUST ALSO IMPLEMENT POSH ACT, SAYS KERALA HIGH COURT (HC)

- Kerala HC has asked **organisations associated with the film industry to take steps to constitute a joint committee to deal with cases of sexual harassment of women**, in line with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013.

- Commonly referred to as the 'PoSH Act', the **Act was enacted with the objective of making workplaces safer for women by preventing, prohibiting and redressing acts** of sexual harassment against them in the workplace.

## • Features of PoSH Act:

- It seeks to **protect women from sexual harassment** at their place of work.
- The Act defines sexual harassment at the workplace and **creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints**.
- The **definition of "aggrieved woman,"** who will get protection under the Act, is extremely wide to cover all women, irrespective of their age or employment status and whether in the **organized or unorganized sectors, public or private, and covers clients, customers and domestic workers as well**.
- An **internal complaints committee (ICC) is mandatory in every private or public organisation** that has 10 or more employees.
- **ICC has been given powers of a civil court** for summoning, discovery and production of documents etc.

## Vishaka guidelines

- **Formulated by the Supreme Court (SC)** in the **Vishaka & Ors vs State Of Rajasthan** (1997), making it mandatory for organisations, whether private or public sector to establish a mechanism for redressal of sexual harassment complaints.
- These **guidelines are legally binding, defined sexual harassment and imposed three key obligations on institutions** — prohibition, prevention, redress.
- SC directed that they should **establish a Complaints Committee, which would look into matters of sexual harassment of women** at the workplace.
- **2013 PoSH Act broadened these guidelines.**

## ALSO IN NEWS



### Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

- India has hit out at the OIC for inviting the Hurriyat chief to attend its foreign ministerial meeting in Islamabad.
- About OIC:**
  - It is **2nd largest inter-governmental organisation** after the United Nations.
  - It **endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world** in the spirit of promoting international Peace and harmony among various people of the world..
  - Membership:** 57 states.
  - Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
  - India is not its member.**



### Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)

- India at the UNSC advocated the BTWC** saying that it is important to ensure its implementation in letter and spirit.
- About BTWC or Biological Weapons Convention (BWC):**
  - It was **the first multilateral treaty categorically banning a class of weapon.**
  - The treaty prohibits the **development, stockpile, production, or transfer of biological agents and toxins** of "types and quantities" that have no justification for **protective or peaceful use.**
  - Membership:** 183 (including India)



### Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) signs the historic Ship Building Agreement

- DCI and Cochin Shipyard signed an agreement to build **India's first domestically-manufactured high-capacity dredger.**
  - It will help in **bringing down the logistic costs of cargos.**
- DCI is a **premier dredging organization** catering to the **dredging and allied services** to Major Ports, Minor Ports, Indian Navy etc.
- Dredging** is the **process of desilting river bodies, or removal** of soil, mud, and dirt at the shores or the bottom.
  - Currently, 70% of our dredging requirement is for **maintenance dredging** (maintaining water bodies previously dredged), while the rest accounts for **capital dredging (desilting for new projects).**



### Bali interim Peace Clause of World Trade Organisation (WTO)

- US has questioned India's high rice exports in 2021 and **accused India at the WTO of using the 'Bali interim peace clause' for over-shooting subsidy limits.**
- The peace clause **protects a developing country's food procurement programmes against action** from WTO members in case subsidy ceilings are breached.
- The "peace clause" was **accepted at the Bali Ministerial (2013).**
- Under the 'Peace Clause', **developing countries can provide WTO-prohibited subsidies to farmers** without inviting any dispute under the Agreement on Agriculture.



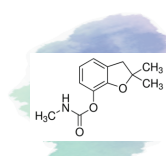
### Land Port Authority of India (LPAI)

- Recently the **10th Foundation Day celebrations of LPAI was held.**
- LPAI is a **statutory body under the Department of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs.**
- It is **entrusted with the task of building land ports on India's borders** and provide state of the art infrastructure facilities to facilitate seamless and efficient movement of cargo and passengers.
- Its **overall objective of reducing dwell time and trade transaction costs, promote regional trade** and people-to-people contact and imbibe the best international practices.



### UPI Lite

- National Payments Commission of India (NPCI)** has launched a new UPI service called UPI Lite.
- The feature **will allow to make faster near real-time small value payments without an internet connection** via the money added in the wallet.
  - Upper limit of a payment:** Rs 200.
  - Total limit of UPI Lite balance:** Rs 2,000
- It will **support QR code-based payment**, presently available payment methods i.e., 123Pay or USSD-based do not support QR-based payment.



### Carbofuran

- Recent death of more than **95 Himalayan griffon vultures** (Near Threatened) and a steppe eagle in Assam has been attributed to **pesticide poisoning due to carbofuran.**
  - Habitat of Himalayan griffon vultures:** western China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, east through the Himalayan mountain range in India, Nepal and Bhutan, to central China and Mongolia.
- About Carbofuran:**
  - It is a **pesticide that is widely used to control insects and nematodes** on a variety of agricultural crops
  - Its extensive use for agricultural and non-agricultural purposes has been directly responsible for the **environmental contamination and human health** issues.



Green triangle

- As part of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', a **"Green Triangle"** named after Mahatma Gandhi was jointly inaugurated in **Madagascar's capital Antananarivo**.
  - > The word green in the plaque signifies commitment to **sustainable development and saving the environment**.
- The new green space highlights **Gandhi's vision and philosophy** when it comes to **reducing consumerism, respecting nature and aiming for sustainable development**.
  - > It will help **raise awareness** among the people about **his values of peace and non-violence**.



Personalities in News

- Rahul Sankrityayan** (April 9, 1893- April 14, 1963)
- Bihar government is in the **process to translate and publish hundreds of original Buddhist manuscripts from Nalanda and Vikramshila**, saved during the burning of the ancient universities in the 12th and 13th centuries by Bakhtiyar Khilji's army and **later brought back to India from Tibet by Rahul Sankrityayan**.
  - **Contributions:**
    - > A **traveller and literary polymath**, he was universally called **Mahapandit** (great scholar) as he knew nearly 30 languages, but he almost wrote in Hindi.
    - > Wrote **"Madhya Asia Ka Itihas"** (History of Central Asia); **"Volga Se Ganga"** (From Volga to Ganga); a grammar and primer of Tibetan in Sanskrit.
    - > Made a **pioneering contribution in preserving and reconstructing the philosophical works of Buddhist logicians like Dharmakirti, Asang and Subandhu**.
    - > His travels prompted him to write travelogues and he is **considered 'father of Hindi travel literature.'**
  - **Values:** Humanist; anti-colonial political activist etc.
  - Awarded by **Sahitya Akademi (1958) & Padma Bhushan**.



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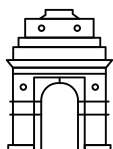
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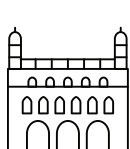
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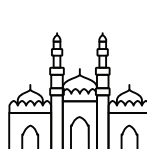
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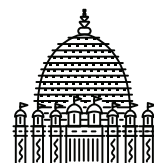
PUNE



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CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI