

# NEWS TODAY

## PROTESTING A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT: UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (UNHRC)

- Development comes at a time of **worldwide protests in support of political rights and racial justice**.
- **UNHRC** is body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**.
- **Key Points raised by UNHRC**
  - > It is a **fundamental human right for people to gather to celebrate or to air grievances**, in public and in private spaces, outdoors, indoors and online.
  - > Everyone, including **children, foreign nationals, women, migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees**, can exercise the right of peaceful assembly.
  - > Governments could not prohibit protests by making **"generalised references to public order or public safety, or an unspecified risk of potential violence"**.
  - > Governments **cannot block internet networks or close down any website** because of their roles in organising or soliciting a peaceful assembly.
  - > **Journalists and human rights observers have a right to monitor** and document any assembly, including those that are violent and unlawful.
- **Indian context on Right to Protest**
  - > **Article 19(1)(b)** assures citizens the right to assemble peaceably and without arms.
  - > In 2012, SC on Ramlila Maidan Incident had stated that right to **assembly and peaceful protest is a fundamental right**.

### About ICCPR

- ICCPR is a **key international human rights treaty**, providing a range of protections for civil and political rights.
- ICCPR, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, are considered the **International Bill of Human Rights**.
- **ICCPR under Article 21** guarantees the right to peaceful assembly.
- It was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1966 & **India has ratified** the Convention in 1979.

## COMMONWEALTH NATIONS LAGGING BEHIND ON ACTION AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY: COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE (CHRI) REPORT

- A report released by Walk Free (Global anti-slavery organization) and CHRI (international NGO) highlights the **need for renewed urgency to eradicate modern slavery and achieve SDG Target 8.7 by 2030**.
- > **Modern slavery** refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuse of power.
- **Key Findings**
  - > **Modern Slavery**
    - ⇒ **Estimated one in every 150 people** in the Commonwealth living in conditions of modern slavery.
    - ⇒ **71% of all victims** of modern slavery are women and girls.
    - ⇒ Only 1/3rd of Commonwealth members criminalise forced marriage.
    - ⇒ India accounted for one-third of all child brides in the world.
  - > **Legislation**
    - ⇒ **A fifth of countries have yet to criminalise human trafficking**, while forced labour is not yet criminalised in 35% of countries.
    - ⇒ India had **not ratified 2011 Domestic Workers Convention & 2014 Forced Labour Protocol**.
    - ⇒ **India has the weakest response on national coordination**, with no national coordinating body or National Action Plan in place.
- **Suggestion:** Support survivors; Strengthen Criminal Justice; improve coordination among national agencies and accountability; eradicate exploitation from supply chains; strengthening and enforcing national laws and policies etc.

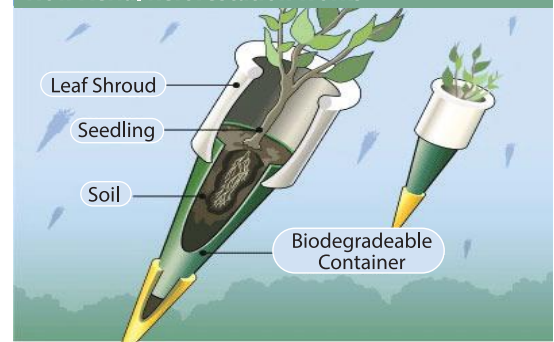
## AERIAL SEEDING TO INCREASE GREEN COVER IN ARAVALLIS

- **Haryana has employed this technique** to improve green cover in Aravalli area of Faridabad.
  - > Recently, **Ecological degradation in the Aravalli region** has become an alarming situation due to issues like increasing urbanisation, illegal mining activities, uncontrolled grazing and felling of trees, unfavourable climatic conditions etc.
  - > Aravalli mountain range **spans four states**—Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi
- Aerial seeding is a **plantation technique wherein seed balls** are sprayed on the pre-determined location **using aerial devices**, including planes, helicopters or drones.
  - > These pellets **sprout when there is enough rain**, with nutrients present within them helping in initial growth.
  - > **Seed balls** are seeds covered with a mixture of clay, compost, char and other components. (**refer infographics**)
- **Advantages**
  - > It is practiced in areas **that are either difficult to reach or inaccessible altogether**, where traditional methods of plantation are difficult.
  - > They **eliminate any need for ploughing and digging holes** in the soil and do not need to be planted since they are already surrounded by soil, nutrients, and microorganisms.
  - > The **clay shell also protects** seeds from birds, ants and rats.

## WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION (WTO) SETS UP DISPUTE PANELS AGAINST INDIA'S ON JAPAN, TAIWAN'S REQUEST

- WTO dispute settlement panels will look into **import duties on mobile phones and some other ICT products imposed by India**.
  - > India **levied 10% customs duty on mobile phones and some other ICT products** for the first time in 2017.
  - > India further increased it to 20%, which countries consider violative of **WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA) signed by India**.
- India has stated that these ICT products are part of **WTO's Information Technology Products (ITA-2) agreement, and India is not part of this pact**.
  - > ITA (or ITA-1) was concluded in 1996, where **participants were committed to completely eliminating tariffs on IT products covered by the Agreement**. India is a part of ITA-1.
  - > Later, in 2015, **over 50 members concluded the expansion of ITA**, adding an additional 201 products valued at over \$1.3 trillion per year. This is referred as ITA-2.
- A WTO member country **can file a dispute** if it perceives that **another country's trade policies or actions are violating global trade norms** and impacting their local industry.
  - > **Complainant can request WTO to set up a dispute panel** to get a satisfactory solution.

### How Aerial Reforestation Works



# YOUNGSTERS SHUNNING HIGHER EDUCATION, SHOWS NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE SURVEY

• Survey shows **deterioration in access to higher education between 2014 and 2018.**

• **Key Findings related to higher education**

➤ Overall, as of 2018-19, **37.4 million students are part of the higher education system** of which 18.2 million are female.

➤ **Dropout rate** was around 5% (2014-2018) for graduates.

➤ Reasons for dropout:

➤ **12% of girls drop out to get married**, another 32% for “domestic activity”. For boys, more than a third drops out to earn.

➤ **Financial limitation** is the prime mover for dropout as at graduate level nine out of 10 students end up paying for education.

➤ **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** at graduate level is as low as 26% against nearly 100% at the primary level.

• **Other issues faced by higher education sector:** Low employability of graduates, poor quality of teaching, weak governance, insufficient funding, and complex regulatory norms.

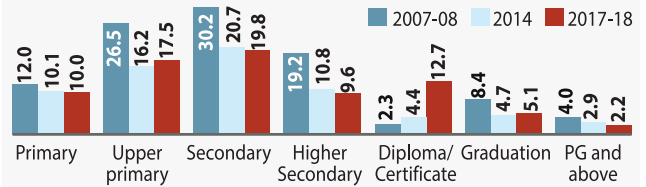
• Presently, there is a need **to enhance government spending on education.**

➤ New **National Education Policy** intends to raise education spending in the country to 6% of GDP.

➤ **India currently spends 3.8% of GDP on education**, against the global average of 4.5%, says World Bank.

## DROPOUT RATE WORSENS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

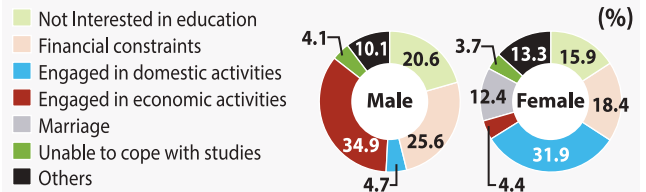
Share of students choosing to drop out (%)



The usual age group is 5-29, but for 2017-2018, the age group considered is 3-35

## GIRLS SHUN EDUCATION FOR MARRIAGE AND DOMESTIC DUTIES

Reasons for choosing not to get education further



## ALSO IN NEWS

<p><b>Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBTC has been asked to <b>explore setting up of Vocational Training and Skill Development Centres for Bamboo sector.</b></li> <li>• CBTC was incorporated with the <b>objective of organizing the hitherto untapped bamboo sector of North East India.</b></li> <li>• <b>It is the field implementation agency</b> and forms a <b>part of the Technology Management Program</b> which is a joint effort of India and UNDP.</li> <li>• CBTC is a registered Society under North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.</li> </ul>
<p><b>UNICEF report on Lead poisoning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Key highlights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A <b>third of the world’s children</b>, around 800 million, are affected by lead poisoning.</li> <li>➤ <b>India accounts for around 275 million</b> of these cases.</li> <li>➤ <b>Informal and substandard recycling of lead-acid batteries</b> is a leading contributor to lead poisoning in low and middle-income countries.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Lead poisoning leads to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ lifelong neurological, cognitive and physical impairment.</li> <li>➤ mental health and behavioural problems, and to an increase of crime and violence.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Ecological restoration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the process of <b>assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed</b> which helps build resilience and regenerative ability of the ecosystem.</li> <li>• This is done through a <b>scientific process of benchmarking</b> with reference models from the same native ecosystem.</li> <li>• It adopts a <b>holistic approach focused on all elements of an ecosystem</b> such as soil, hydrology, flora, fauna, etc.</li> <li>• India has an ambitious target of restoring 26 million hectares of degraded lands by 2030.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vermin</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently, Supreme Court accentuated the <b>urgent need to find an alternative to killing wild animals as vermin</b> even while protecting crops from them.</li> <li>• Vermins are <b>wild animals that are believed to be harmful to crops, farm animals, or which carry disease</b> etc. Ex: rodents, rhesus monkeys etc.</li> <li>• They are included under <b>Schedule V of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972</b>, depriving them of any protection under law.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>States can send a list of wild animals to Centre</b> requesting it to declare them vermin.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Herd immunity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre said that, given the size of India’s population, herd immunity “cannot be a strategic choice or option” for fighting COVID-19.</li> <li>• Herd immunity arises when a <b>high percentage of the population is protected through vaccination against a virus or bacteria</b>, making it difficult for a disease to spread because there are so few susceptible people left to infect.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative Bill</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This bill was recently passed by US House panel.</li> <li>• It <b>seeks to establish an exchange program between India and U.S.</b> to study the work and legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.</li> <li>• It also seeks <b>to establish Gandhi-King Global Academy</b>, a conflict resolution initiative based on the principles of nonviolence.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Antitrust trial</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently, <b>antitrust panel of US congress questioned big four technology companies, Google, Facebook, Amazon, and Apple.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It has sought to know if they had become too big to fail and if they were stifling the competition from other smaller companies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Antitrust laws</b> are competition laws, developed by the U.S. government to protect consumers from predatory business practices.</li> </ul>

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