

NEWS TODAY

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (UNDRR) RELEASES “THE HUMAN COST OF DISASTERS 2000-2019” REPORT

• UNDRR was established in 1999 and serves as the focal point in the UN System for the coordination of disaster risk reduction.

➤ It supports the **implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030** (aims for a substantial reduction in disaster losses resulting from both man-made and natural hazards).

Key Findings

• Between 2000 to 2019, there were more than **7,000 major recorded disaster events claiming 1.23 million lives, affecting 4.2 billion people** (many on more than one occasion) resulting in approximately **US\$2.97 trillion** in global economic losses.

➤ China, U.S and **India** are **3 most affected** countries.

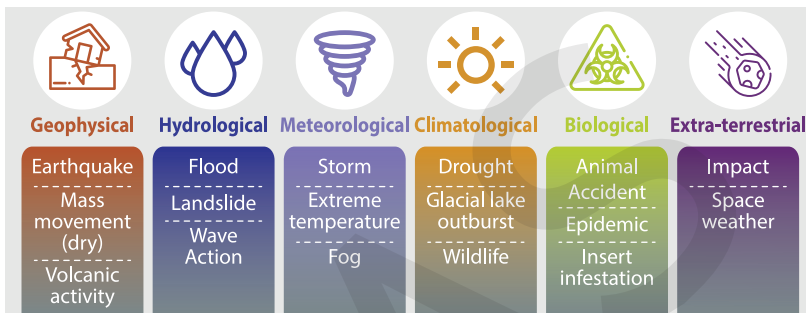
➤ **India and China** accounted for over 2.8 billion disaster-affected people in 2000-2019.

• **Majority of disaster events were floods (44%) and storms** including hurricanes, cyclones and storm surges (28%).

➤ **India is the second most effected country by floods** (17 floods events per year).

• Shifting rainfall patterns and greater variability in precipitation poses a **risk to the 70% of global agriculture that is rain-fed**.

➤ In India, **51% of total sown areas are rain-fed** and contribute nearly 40% of the total food production.



HOW ELECTION COMMISSION (EC) DECIDES ON PARTY SYMBOLS

• It is done by EC as per the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) (Amendment) Order, 2017**.

➤ The order was first promulgated in 1968 under **Representation of the People Act, 1951**.

➤ Under the order, **party symbols are of two types-“reserved” or “free**.

• **A reserved symbol is reserved for a recognised political party**, which can be a National party or a State party.

➤ Currently, there are **8 recognised national parties and 64 state parties**.

➤ **Two or more recognised parties can have same symbol** if they are not contesting in the same state or UTs.

• Free symbols are allotted to **registered but unrecognised** political parties or any individual.

➤ There are **more than 2500 unrecognised parties** in India.

➤ To get a symbol allotted, the **candidate will have to provide a list of three symbols** in order of preference from the free symbols list at the time of filing nomination papers.

• EC is **empowered to decide disputes** among rival groups or sections (in case of a party split) of a recognised political party staking claim to its name and symbol.

REGISTRAR GENERAL OF INDIA (RGI) CLARIFIES ON USE OF AADHAAR

• In response to an RTI application, RGI clarified that Aadhaar is **not mandatory for birth, death registration**.

➤ It also stated that **if Aadhaar is provided voluntarily, it must not be printed on any document or stored in any database** of births and deaths in full form.

• Aadhaar is a verifiable **12-digit identification number** issued by **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** to the resident of India.

➤ Aadhaar collects **only four pieces of personal information** (name, age, gender and address) along with **biometric data**.

➤ **UIDAI is a statutory authority established under the provisions of Aadhaar Act 2016**, under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.

• In 2018, **Supreme Court (SC) while upholding the Aadhaar scheme as constitutionally valid provided certain riders** regarding its use for various services:

➤ Aadhaar **cannot be made mandatory**: for openings of a bank account and for getting mobile connections, for school admission.

➤ **Mandatory for**: Linking of Aadhaar and PAN, for filing of Income Tax Return.

➤ **Private companies cannot ask** for Aadhaar.

• **SC struck down the provision in Aadhaar law allowing sharing of data** on the ground of national security.

PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS REGULATORY BOARD (PNGRB) PROPOSES UNIFIED TARIFF REGULATIONS FOR NATURAL GAS PIPELINES

• Draft Regulations propose **pooling of the existing approved pipeline tariffs** to arrive at **one single tariff to be charged across the pipelines**.

➤ This will be called the **Unified Pipeline Tariff (UPT)**.

➤ There would be **cross subsidisation of consumers located away** from natural gas sources by consumers located near the gas sources.

• It proposes to divide the **entire network into two zones**:

➤ **Zone-1**: Extending till 300 km from the point of injection of natural gas in the national gas grid from either end i.e. Western or Eastern end of the grid.

➤ **Zone-2**: Entire length thereafter.

• In the current tariff regime, **farther a player is located from the natural gas source, more the consumer pays for the transportation** of the natural gas, thus resulting in concentration of gas-based industries near the natural gas sources.

• **Benefits of UPT**

➤ Uniform single tariff irrespective of the location.

➤ Support gas offtake through new pipelines like Urja Ganga.

• **PNGRB is a statutory body** responsible for regulation of refining, transportation, distribution, storage, marketing, supply and sale of petroleum products and natural gas.



WORLD ENERGY OUTLOOK 2020 RELEASED BY INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)

- World Energy Outlook, IEA's flagship publication, provides a **comprehensive view of how the global energy system could develop in the coming decades.**
 - 2020 report examines in detail the **effects of the pandemic, and in particular how it affects the prospects for rapid clean energy transitions.**
- Highlights of the report**
 - Global energy demand is set to drop by 5% in 2020**, energy-related CO2 emissions by 7%, and energy investment by 18%.
 - By 2040, **coal's share of the energy mix will fall below 20% for the first time** since the industrial revolution.
 - Renewables (mainly solar) will push coal off the grid**, meeting 80% of the growth in global electricity demand to 2030.
 - Electricity **grids could prove to be the weak link in the transformation of the power sector**, with implications for the reliability and security of electricity supply.
 - Electricity storage plays an increasingly vital role** in ensuring the flexible operation of power systems, with **India becoming the largest market for utility-scale battery storage.**
- IEA was **founded in 1974 to help countries collectively respond to oil supply disruptions.** It is an autonomous body within the OECD framework.
 - India became an Associate Member in 2017.**

ALSO IN NEWS

<p>Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 108th edition will be held in 2022 instead of scheduled 2021. ISCA owes its origin to the initiative of two British Chemists, namely, Professor J. L. Simonsen and Professor P.S. MacMahon. It aims to promote cause of science in India by holding annual congress, publishing proceedings, journals and securing and managing funds for promotion of science. The first session of the Congress was held in 1914 at Calcutta. In 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister, was the General President of the session. The tradition has been carried on by successive PMs.
<p>Asia/ Pacific group (APG) on money laundering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an inter-governmental organization focused on ensuring that its members effectively implement the international standards against money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing related to weapons of mass destruction. There are 41 jurisdictional members of the APG within the Asia-Pacific region. India is a member.
<p>India, Maldives ink \$400-mn pact for connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India provided \$500 million package to the Maldives to fund the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It includes \$100 million of grant and \$400 million Line of Credit. GMCP is a 6.7 km bridge and causeway network connecting Male, with islands Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the second significant connectivity project in Maldives, after China backed China-Maldives Friendship Bridge was inaugurated. India had previously loaned \$800 mn to Maldives.
<p>Women Scientists Scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was launched by Department of Science and Technology (DST) in 2002-03. This initiative primarily aimed at providing opportunities to women scientists and technologists between the age group of 27-57 years who had a break in their career but desired to return to mainstream. Recently, women scientist availed this scheme through mathematical modelling showed that the deadly effects of nuclear weapons can be partially mitigated or reduced with the help of dust particles.
<p>Tech for Tribals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an initiative of TRIFED supported by Ministry of MSME. It aims at capacity building and imparting entrepreneurship skills to tribal forest produce gatherers enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri VanDhan Yojana (PMVDY). The trainees will undergo a 30 days program over six weeks. It will ensure higher success rate of the Tribal Entrepreneurs by enabling and empowering them to run their business with marketable products with quality certifications.
<p>Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an innovative technological solution aimed at strengthening immunization supply chain systems across the country. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is being implemented under National Health Mission (NHM) by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It aims to provide real-time information on vaccine stocks and flows, and storage temperatures across all cold chain points in the country. Recently eVIN is being repurposed for the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine.
<p>Aquaponics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, a pilot Aquaponics facility developed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Mohali was inaugurated. Aquaponics is a form of agriculture that combines raising fish in tanks (recirculating aquaculture) with soilless plant culture (hydroponics). In aquaponics, the nutrient-rich water from raising fish provides a natural fertilizer for the plants and the plants help to purify the water for the fish. An aquaponics system uses 90% less water versus traditional farming.

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