

NEWS TODAY

2020 STATE OF WORLD POPULATION REPORT RELEASED BY UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

• Report focuses on **gender bias and violence against girls and women.**

• **Key highlights**

> **Harmful practices:** Report identifies 19 harmful practices against women, out of which 3 are most widespread and persistent: **female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and son preference.**

⇒ Globally, **one in five girls is married by age 18.**

⇒ **In India,** child marriage is directly linked to **poverty, poor education and geographic location,** rural versus urban and gender-based sex selection as emerged as a **problem among affluent families.**

> **Missing girls:** Preference for sons and gender-biased sex selection have led to over **142 million girls missing globally.**

⇒ **In India, 46 million girls are missing** i.e. they were not born due to sex-selection biases - each year between 2013 and 2017.

⇒ 1.2 million girls lost annually to female foeticide (**refer infographics**).

> **Impact of COVID:** Pandemic threatens to reverse progress made in ending these practices due to economic hardships, loss of access to health services etc.

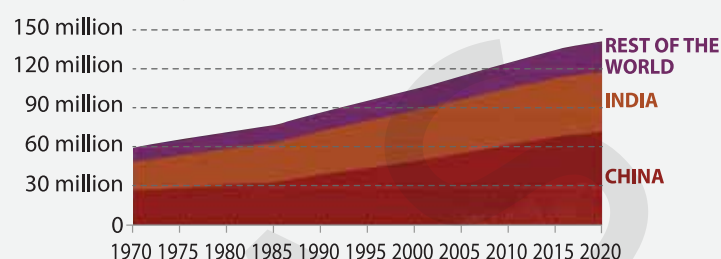
• **Suggestions:**

> **Tackle the root causes,** especially gender-biased norms.

> **Estimating funding needs and tracking financial flows** for sexual and reproductive health services.

Number of "missing females" in the world

Estimates of missing females*, in selected populations, in millions, as of 2020



* "Missing females" are those whose numbers are reflected in sex ratio imbalances at birth as a result of gender-biased (prenatal) sex selection combined with excess female mortality stemming from postnatal sex selection.

INDIA, BHUTAN SIGN PACT FOR FIRST JOINT VENTURE HYDROPOWER PROJECT

• It is the first time an India-Bhutan hydropower project will be **constructed as a 50:50 Joint Venture**, not as a government-to-government agreement.

> **600 MW Kholongchhu project** will be constructed in Bhutan's less developed eastern region of Trashiyangtse.

> It is expected to be **completed in the second half of 2025.**

> **Joint Venture Partners:** Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam, a Himachal Pradesh PSU, and Bhutanese Druk Green Power Corporation.

• Kholongchhu project is **one of four additional projects agreed to in 2014**, for development of Hydroelectric Projects (HEP) of capacity 2120 MW under Joint Venture Model. **Other 3 joint venture to be are:** 180 MW Bunakha, 570 MW Wangchhu and 770 MW Chamkharchhu.

> So far, **India has constructed 4 HEPs in Bhutan totaling around 2100MW** (336 MW Chukha, 60 MW Kurichhu and 1020 MW Tala, 720MW Mangdechhu).

• Hydropower sector is **flagship area of India-Bhutan bilateral cooperation** which helps to further integrate economies, bring further prosperity and enhance energy security for both the countries.

> India is committed to help Bhutan to **create a total 10,000 MW of installed capacity by 2020.**

CONVALESCENT PLASMA THERAPY (CPT) IN INDIA

• Two related developments in CPT:

> **India's first plasma bank in Delhi**

⇒ First-of-its-kind plasma bank will be set up **for the treatment of COVID-19 patients.**

⇒ Idea is to **extract and store plasma from people** who have recovered from COVID-19 and give it to someone suffering from the disease.

> **Project PLATINA by Maharashtra**

⇒ It will be **world's largest CPT trial-cum-project** for the treatment of critical COVID-19 patients.

• CPT involves **transfusion of the blood plasma** of a recovered patient into another patient.

> It is based on this concept of **passive immunity** where the **short-term immunity is developed by introduction of antibodies** into a person from another person or animal.

> Plasma is matrix on which **blood cells float and houses antibodies.**

⇒ **Antibodies are proteins that fight the foreign substances** that invade the body.

> Once that is done, some blood cells function as memory cells so that they can **identify and defeat the same enemy** if and when it invades again by quickly producing the same antibodies.

MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES LAUNCHED PM FORMALIZATION OF MICRO FOOD PROCESSING ENTERPRISES (PM FME)

• It is a part of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan which aims **to provide financial, technical and business support** for upgradation of **existing micro food processing enterprises.**

> It would generate **total investment of Rs 35,000 crore**, 9 lakh skilled and semi-skilled employment and benefit 8 lakh units.

• **Funding pattern:** Outlay of Rs 10,000 crore with sharing mechanism as 90:10 for North Eastern and Himalayan States, 60:40 for other states.

• **Key features**

> Scheme adopts **One District One Product (ODODP) approach** to reap benefit of scale.

⇒ **States would identify food product for a district** keeping in view the existing clusters and availability of raw material.

⇒ It will focus on **waste to wealth products, minor forest products** and Aspirational Districts.

⇒ **Support will be provided** for common infrastructure and branding marketing for ODOP products.

> **Micro enterprises will get 35% subsidy on project cost**, with a ceiling of Rs 10 lakh.

⇒ Micro enterprises comprises of **units in rural areas, family run enterprises etc.**

> **Seed capital @ Rs. 40,000/- per SHG member** would be provided for working capital and purchase of small tools.

> Special focus on **capacity building and research.**

RISING IMPORTS OF ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSIONS A THREAT TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: UNCTAD PAPER

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has favoured India's stance of ending the e-commerce moratorium which has led to loss of revenue to developing countries.
 - > US, EU, Australia, Singapore and Japan have sought a permanent moratorium while India and South Africa have vehemently opposed it.
- Under e-commerce moratorium, first established in 1998, **WTO Members do not impose customs duties on electronic transmissions.**
 - > Moratorium was agreed as there was **no clarity on how electronic transmissions** are being classified or what they covered.
 - > Electronic transmissions is commonly held to encompass anything from software, emails, and text messages to digital music, movies and videogames.
- The **paper highlighted that:**
 - > Developing countries are facing a **threat of an exponential rise in imports of electronic transmissions of luxury items** during COVID-19 crisis but they're unable to tax these.
 - ➔ India's potential loss of revenue by not taxing electronic transmissions is around \$500 million every year.
 - > Need to **retain the flexibility of regulating their imports** and to generate tariff revenues when needed.

ALSO IN NEWS

Covaxin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covaxin is India's first vaccine candidate for COVID-19. • It has got approval for human clinical trials from Drug Controller General of India. Trials are scheduled to start across the country in July. • It is India's 'first' indigenous COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with ICMR and National Institute of Virology, Pune.
Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His birthday (29th June) is celebrated as National Statistics Day. • He set up the Indian Statistical Institute in Kolkata in 1932, and popularly known as Father of Indian Statistics. • He was instrumental in formulating India's second five-year-plan (1956-1961), which laid the blueprint for industrialisation and development in India. • He devised a measure of comparison between two data sets, now called Mahalanobis Distance. • He also introduced innovative techniques for conducting large-scale sample surveys.
Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology bans 59 Chinese Mobile apps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision was taken in view of information available that these are engaged in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order. • These were banned under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 and relevant provisions of Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules 2009. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Section 69A provides power to issue directions for blocking for public access of any information through any computer resource.
PM SVANidhi Portal launched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) is aimed at enabling the street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to COVID-19 lockdown. • Recently, SIDBI developed portal which will provide an end-to-end solution for SVANidhi scheme administration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It will facilitate multiple scheme functions viz. loan application flow, Mobile App, e-KYC of applicants, integration with UIDAI, Udyamimitra, NPCI, PAISA etc.
Maharashtra to launch plug & play infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is aimed for fast-tracking investment proposals in the state. • A plug and play concept refers to making available ready facilities like building, power-water-sewage connectivity, road connectivity, in addition to basic things including clearances in hand required to start the industry. • Union Budget of 2015 proposed plug and play infrastructure model for the first time in India.
Narcondam hornbill (Rhyticeros narcondami)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This bird is endemic to the Narcondam Island (volcanic island) in Andamans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Narcondam Island has been identified as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International and the Bombay Natural History Society. • These are frugivores that primarily eat fruits and berries. • IUCN status: Endangered
Gangotri National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is situated in Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand in the upper catchment of Bhagirathi River. • Gangotri glacier, the origin of river Ganga, is located inside Gangotri National Park. • It is typical of high-altitude ecosystems, with decisive influence from Trans Himalayan elements in both physical and biological characteristics. • Recently, Uttarakhand allowed forest land transfer in Gangotri National Park for development of roads to make movement of ITBP personnel near China border.
U.N.75 declaration Delayed over Climate text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration is to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the UN Charter. • It was first delayed as countries including India objected to language that was considered too aligned with Chinese government's ideology. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > But issue was resolved by replacing the phrase shared vision of a common future, associated with Communist Party of China (CPC), with the common future of present and coming generations. • Now, it is being delayed again as U.S. has raised concerns over a paragraph on climate.

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