

NEWS TODAY

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS (MORTH) NOTIFIES CONSTITUTION OF NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY BOARD (NRSB)

- Establishing a NRSB was **provisioned in Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 (MVA)**.
- NRSB will**
 - **Oversee issues related to road safety** and evolve effective strategies for implementation of Road Safety Policy, 2010 (based on Sundar Committee report).
 - India recorded **1.2 lakh cases of deaths due to negligence relating to road accidents** in 2020 (NCRB report).
 - **Formulate specific standards** for road safety, traffic management and road construction for hilly regions.
 - **Promote Good Samaritans**; new vehicle technology etc.
 - **Formulate guidelines for capacity building and skill development** for traffic police, hospital and highway authorities etc.
 - **Conduct research** to improve crash investigation.
- Composition:** A Chairman and not less than three, but not exceeding seven Members, to be appointed by Central Government.
- Initiatives taken to promote road safety in India**
 - **MVA** for better vehicle safety standards, increased penalties for violation of rules etc.
 - **Signed Brasilia declaration** and committed to reduce number of deaths in road accidents.
 - **4E Strategy** by MoRTH, i.e. **Education, Engineering** (Roads/Vehicles), **Enforcement** and **Emergency care**.
 - Recently launched **scheme for grant of Award to Good Samaritan** helping victims of fatal accidents.



2021 NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS AWARDED

- This year's prize has been awarded for **groundbreaking contributions to understanding of complex physical systems**.
 - Complex systems are **characterised by randomness and disorder** and are difficult to understand.
 - This year's Prize **recognises new methods for describing them** and predicting their long-term behavior **with applications beyond physics**, such as mathematics, biology, neuroscience.
- One half of the prize was awarded to **Syukuro Manabe and Klaus Hasselmann for their work in the physical modeling of Earth's climate**, quantifying variability and reliably predicting global warming.
 - Starting in 1960s, **Mr. Manabe demonstrated how increases in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would increase global temperatures**, laying the foundations for current climate models.
 - **Mr. Hasselmann created a model that linked weather and climate**, helping explain why climate models can be reliable despite the seemingly chaotic nature of the weather.
- Second half was awarded to **Giorgio Parisi for the discovery of the interplay of disorder and fluctuations in physical systems** from atomic to planetary scales.
 - He **built a model to understand complex systems** in fields as different as mathematics, biology, neuroscience and machine learning.

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS (MORTH) NOTIFIES INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES PERTAINING TO VEHICLE SCRAPPING POLICY

- Move is **aimed at nudging vehicle owners to discard old and polluting vehicles**, which have higher maintenance and fuel consumption costs.
 - As an incentive, there will be **waiver of fee for issue of certificate of registration for a new vehicle purchased** against a scrapped vehicle.
 - Disincentives include **increase in fee for conducting fitness test and renewal of fitness certificate** (for vehicles more than 15 years old), **increase in fitness certification fee for transport vehicles more than 15 years old** etc.
- In August 2021, **National Automobile Scrapage Policy (NASP)** was launched for modernization of vehicle population and removal of unfit vehicles from roads in a scientific manner.
 - India has 51 lakh light motor vehicles that are more than 20 years old and 34 lakh that are over 15 years old.
- **Significance of NASP**
 - To achieve **reduction in vehicular air pollutants** to fulfil India's climate commitments.
 - Improve **road and vehicular safety**.
 - Achieve **better fuel efficiency**.
 - **Formalize** the currently **informal vehicle scrapping industry**.
 - **Boost availability of low-cost raw materials** for automotive, steel and electronics industry.

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO) RELEASES 'THE STATE OF CLIMATE SERVICES REPORT, 2021'

- These **annual reports focus on the state of climate services** for assessing adaptation needs in climate-sensitive socio economic sectors. **2021 edition focuses on water**.
- **Key findings**
 - **3.6 billion people had inadequate access to water** at least one month per year in 2018. **By 2050**, this is expected to rise to **more than five billion**.
 - Since 2000, **flood-related disasters have risen by 134% and duration of droughts also increased by 29%** compared with the two previous decades.
 - **End-to-end riverine flood and drought forecasting** and warning systems are **absent or inadequate in 34% and 54% of WMO Members** respectively.
- **Recommendations**
 - Invest in **Integrated Resources Water Management** as a solution to better manage water stress.
 - Invest in **end-to-end drought and flood early warning systems** in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), including for drought warning in Africa and flood warning in Asia.
 - **Join Water and Climate Coalition** to promote policy development for integrated water and climate assessments.
 - **Improve the interaction among national level stakeholders** to co-develop and operationalize climate services.

GLOBAL WATER STRESS HOTSPOTS



Global Water Stress Hotspot
World Meteorological Organization 2021
Based on data from the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Resources Institute

MINISTRY OF COAL (MOC) NOTIFIES RULES FOR 50% SALE OF COAL FROM CAPTIVE MINES

- MoC has **amended Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 to allow lessee of a captive mine** to sale up to 50% of the total coal or lignite produced in a financial year.
 - In March 2021, Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Act, 2021 **was passed to allow sale of minerals by captive mines**.
- Captive mines are those **that produce coal or mineral for exclusive use by the company that owns the mines**, while non-captive ones are those that produce as well as sell the fuel.
- **Significance of the move**
 - **Availability of additional coal** will ease pressure on power plants and will also aid in import substitution of coal.
 - **Greater utilisation of mining capacities** of captive coal and lignite blocks.
 - **Will boost revenue** of the state governments.
- MoC has also made **provisions for grant of mining lease** to a government company or corporation for coal or lignite **for a period of fifty years**.
 - Enlargement mining period leases will reduce multiplicity of applications for extensions, thereby ensuring continuity in mining operations.

NOTE: Refer News Today dated 5th October, 2020 for details on 'Agenda document for 2021-22' of the Ministry of Coal.

'2021 STATE OF THE EDUCATION REPORT FOR INDIA: NO TEACHER, NO CLASS' RELEASED BY UNESCO

- Third edition of the report **focused on the theme of teachers, teaching and teacher education.**

• Key findings

- **Teachers Profile:** Out of 9.7 million teachers, about 50% are employed in government sector and almost 50% are women.
- **Single-teacher schools:** At national level, 7% schools are single-teacher schools with some states having as high as 16% (Goa and Telangana). Almost all single-teacher schools are in rural areas.
- **Retention rate:** While gross enrolment ratio (GER) for elementary schools stands at 102.1 in 2019-2020 (81.6 in 2001), overall retention is 74.6% for elementary education and 59.6% for secondary education in 2019-20.
- **Lack of digital infrastructure:** Overall availability of computing devices (desktops or laptops) in school is 22% and access to the internet in schools is 19% for all India.

- In a related development, **Ministry of Education released 'Guidelines on School Safety and Security'**, prepared by an expert committee following a Supreme Court's order.

- Guidelines identified **several categories of negligence for which school administrations will be held accountable.**

Recommendations to address the challenges facing the teaching profession in India

- **Improve the terms of employment** of teachers in both public and private schools.
- **Increase the number of teachers** and improve working conditions in **North Eastern states, rural areas and aspirational districts.**
- Recognize **teachers as frontline workers.**
- **Increase the number of physical education, music, art, vocational education,** early childhood and special education teachers.

ALSO IN NEWS



State of the World's Children 2021 report released by UNICEF

- Report **examines child, adolescent and caregiver mental health.**
- **Key Findings related to India**
 - **14% of 15 to 24-year-olds in India feel depressed** or has little interest in doing things.
 - At least **50 million children in India were affected with mental health issues** before COVID; 80 – 90% have not sought support.
 - India has spent **only 0.05% of its health budget annually on mental health.**
 - **Only 41% of young people (15 -24 years) were willing to get support for mental health problems.**







Status of Coral Reefs of the World 2020 report released

- Report was produced **by Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)**, an operational network of the International Coral Reef Initiative.
- **Key findings**
 - **Between 2009 and 2018**, continuous rise in sea surface temperature (SST) **cost the world 14% of its coral reefs.**
 - **Large scale coral bleaching events are the greatest disturbance** to the world's coral reefs.
 - Since 2010, **almost all regions exhibited a decline in average coral cover**, mostly associated with periods of either rapid increase in SST anomaly or sustained high SST anomaly.



Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme(CHCDS)

- **Ministry of Textiles** has approved **continuation of CHCDS.**
- CHCDS aims to **create world-class infrastructure that caters to the business needs of the local artisans & SMEs**(small and medium enterprises) to boost production and export.
- Under this **clusters have been set up to assist the artisans & entrepreneurs** to set up world-class units **with modern infrastructure, latest technology, and adequate training** and human resource development inputs, coupled with market linkages and production diversification.

 <p>Industrial Park Rating System (IPRS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, 2nd edition of the IPRS report was launched by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). IPRS aims to enhance industrial infrastructure competitiveness and support policy development for enabling industrialization across the country. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It will promote Ease of Doing Business by helping Policymakers, investors and financial institutions through informed decision making IPRS system assigns ratings to Industrial parks under four pillars of Internal infrastructure; External infrastructure and Connectivity; Business Support Services; and Environment and Safety Management.
 <p>Heli-borne survey for ground water management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was recently launched by Ministry of Science & Technology. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Technique provides high resolution 3D image of sub-surface up to a depth of 500 meters below the ground. It is being employed by Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) for mapping groundwater sources in arid regions of north western Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab and thus helps utilize groundwater for drinking purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Survey will be carried out in two phases in collaboration with Ministry of Jal Shakti as a part of National Aquifer Mapping Project.
 <p>New biodegradable polymer fabricated using guar gum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A team of Indian scientists have developed an environmentally friendly, non-toxic, biodegradable polymer using guar gum and chitosan. Both guar gum and chitosan are polysaccharides extracted from guar beans and shells of crab and shrimps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Due to some drawbacks of polysaccharides, such as low mechanical properties, high water-solubility etc, they are not preferred as packaging material. Researchers now fabricated a guar gum-chitosan film which is a cross-linked polysaccharide. Guar gum-chitosan film having high water stability, high mechanical strength, and excellent resistance to harsh environmental conditions can potentially be used in packaging applications.
 <p>Zircon Missile</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zircon is a hypersonic cruise missile, successfully test-fired by Russia from a nuclear submarine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Hypersonic refers to speed five or more times than that of sound in air. Hypersonic missiles are much faster and more agile than normal ones, making them much harder for missile defence systems to track and intercept.



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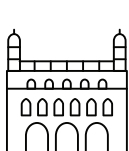
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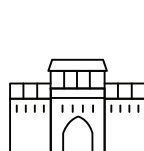
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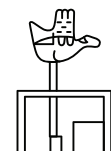
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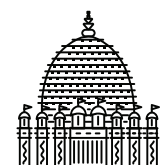
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