

NEWS TODAY

CLIMATE SMART CITIES ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (CSCAF 2.0) AND STREETS FOR PEOPLE CHALLENGE LAUNCHED

- CSCAF is a **first-of-its-kind assessment framework** on climate relevant parameters launched in 2019 by Ministry of State for Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- Its objective is to **provide a clear roadmap for Indian cities towards combating climate change** while planning their actions within city including investments.
 - > It intends to **inculcate a climate-sensitive approach** to urban planning and development.
- Framework has 28 indicators across **five categories**: Energy and Green Buildings, Urban Planning, Green Cover & Biodiversity, Mobility and Air Quality, Water Management and Waste Management.
- **Climate Centre for Cities** under National Institute of Urban Affairs is supporting MoHUA in implementation of CSCAF.

Streets for People Challenge

- It is an initiative of **Smart Cities Mission (SCM)** that aims to **inspire cities to create walking-friendly and vibrant streets** through quick, innovative, and low-cost measures.
- Challenge requires **each city to test at least one flagship walking project** and enhance liveability in one neighbourhood.
 - > Streets with high footfall zones can be considered as potential locations for flagship project.
- Fit India Mission along with India program of Institute for Transport Development and Policy have partnered with SCM to support the challenge.

CSCAF 2.0

- Improved indicators with feedback from cities and thematic experts
- Simplified for easy understanding
- Alignment with Swachh Survekshan & Ease of Living
- Standard evidence templates and data input templates to support in data collection
- Centralized portal for data entry with dashboard to view real time updates

INDIA, CHINA AGREE ON 5-POINT PLAN FOR RESOLVING BORDER STANDOFF

- External affairs ministers of both countries had meeting on side-lines of **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation** meet in Moscow and conceded that standoff was “not in the interest of either side”.
- They agreeing to a five-point plan to **disengage and reduce tensions along Line of Actual Control (LAC)**, where Indian and Chinese troops have been engaged in a four-and-a-half-month-long stand-off.
- **5 points are:**
 - > **Follow consensus:** Take guidance from consensus of leaders on developing India-China relations, including not allowing differences to become disputes.
 - > **Talk and step back:** Troops should continue dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions.
 - > **Respect agreements:** Abide by all the existing agreements and protocols on China-India boundary affairs and avoid any action that could escalate matters.
 - > **Use dialogue mechanisms** through Special Representatives mechanism, meetings of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on border affairs.
 - > **Build confidence:** Expedite work to conclude new confidence-building measures to maintain and enhance peace and tranquillity.
- However, two sides have not given a timeline for process and there is no mention of restoration of status quo along LAC.

ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY ASKS STATES TO IMPOSE AND ENFORCE STRICT LAWS TO CURB ILLEGAL SAND MINING

- Illegal mining leads to loss of revenue to the State and degradation of the environment.
- Minister also appealed for **sustainable sand mining** to prevent the depletion of natural resources from river beds.
- Sand is a **minor mineral under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act)** therefore it comes under state government regulations.
 - > MMDR Act **empowers state governments to frame rules to prevent illegal mining**, transportation and storage of minerals.

Need for Sustainable sand Mining

- > To ensure the **conservation of the river equilibrium** and its natural environment.
- > To ensure there is **no obstruction to the river flow**, water transport.
- > To **prevent ground water pollution** by prohibiting sand mining on fissures.

Steps to Promote Sustainable Mining:

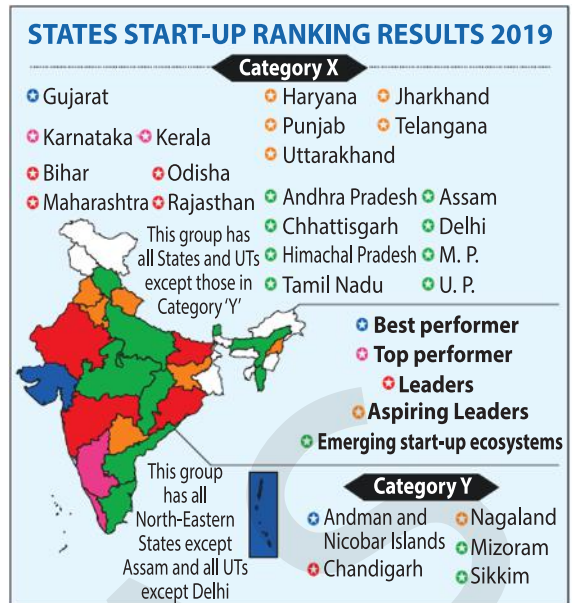
- > **Sand mining framework (2018) & Enforcement & Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining (2020)** to assist governments in addressing issues of Sand mining sector.
- > **Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana** to be implemented by funds collected under District Mineral Foundations and utilised for welfare and development of mining affected areas.
- > **Mining Surveillance System**
- > Developing **alternatives to sand**

VACCINE HESITANCY ON THE RISE ACROSS THE GLOBE

- A study published in Lancet showed trend of vaccine hesitancy has increased in many countries between 2015 and 2019.
- Vaccine hesitancy refers to **delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccination services**.
 - > It is complex and context specific varying across time, place and vaccines.
 - > World Health Organization declared vaccine hesitancy as one of top 10 threats to global health in 2019.
- It **can be caused by individual and group** (Experience with past vaccination, Health system and providers-trust etc); **contextual influences** (Communication and media, Religion/culture/gender/socio-economic etc) and **any vaccine-specific issues** (risk/Benefit, Mode of administration etc).
- **Key Findings**
 - > **Misinformation or communication of bad science** was main factor that influenced vaccine behavior.
 - > Rising vaccine hesitancy has led to a resurgence in diseases that were long thought to have gone away.
 - In 2019, the USA reported over 1,200 measles cases, the most in that country since 1992.
 - > **On Effectiveness of vaccines**, India ranked highest.
- **Suggestions:** global investment in active vaccine safety surveillance, continuous monitoring of public perceptions and development of rapid and flexible communication strategies.

STATES STARTUP RANKING 2019 RELEASED BY DEPARTMENT FOR PROMOTION OF INDUSTRY AND INTERNAL TRADE

- Objective is to foster competitiveness and propel States and UTs to work towards uplifting startup ecosystem.
- It will encourage mutual learning among all states and will provide support in policy formulation and implementation.
 - India is 3rd largest startup ecosystem in world.
 - More than 36,000 start-ups recognised under Startup India initiative
 - 29 States/UTs have a state startup policy.
- Ranking Framework has 7 broad reform area, consisting of 30 action points, including Institutional Support, Easing Compliances, Incubation support, Seed Funding Support etc.
- States and UTs have been divided into Category 'X' and Category 'Y'.
 - A total of 22 States and 3 UTs participated in the exercise.
- In each category they are ranked under 5 heads (see infographic)
- To promote Aatmanirbar Bharat, government recommended start-ups to focus on reimagining products through innovation and disruptive technologies; redesign and re-engineer processes that result in reforming regulatory and age-old practices; work on people-centric ideas.
- Recent Government measures to boost start-ups: Startup India scheme, ASPIRE Scheme, Fund of Funds for Startups etc.



ALSO IN NEWS

<p>Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Sero Survey results declared</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was conducted from May 11-June 4, in 21 States for presence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies. Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.73% adults were exposed to coronavirus, amounting to 6.4 million infections. Seropositivity (odds of findings a positive case for every test conducted) was highest in 18 to 45 years age group and lowest among those above 60 (17.2%). A sero-survey involves testing of blood serum of a group of individuals to monitor trends in prevalence of novel coronavirus infection at district level.
<p>Global Economic Freedom Index</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is released by Centre for Civil Society in conjunction with Canada's Fraser Institute. It measures economic freedom, or ability of individuals to make their own economic decisions in a country, by analysing policies and institutions of these countries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It does so by looking at indicators like regulation, freedom to trade internationally, size of government, property rights, government spending and taxation. India is ranked 105th (79th in 2018) among 162 countries. Hongkong topped the index followed by Singapore.
<p>Insolvency professional agencies (IPA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has proposed setting minimum qualifications for members of governing boards of insolvency professional agencies (IPA). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IBBI is a Statutory Body with regulatory oversight over Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Professional Agencies, Information Utilities, etc. IPAs monitor the conduct and performance of insolvency professionals and initiate action against members who do not comply with provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). IPAs and IBBI were introduced under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
<p>Ecological threat register (ETR) 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ETR is produced by Institute for Economics and Peace. ETR measures ecological threats that countries are currently facing and provides projections to 2050. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It identifies areas where resilience is unlikely to be strong enough to adapt or cope with these future shocks. ETR identified three clusters of ecological hotspots, which are particularly susceptible to collapse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sahel-Horn belt of Africa, from Mauritania to Somalia; Southern African belt, from Angola to Madagascar; Middle East and Central Asian belt, from Syria to Pakistan.
<p>J&K launches grievance redressal portal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jammu and Kashmir Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JK-IGRAMS) was launched on pilot basis. With this, J&K became first UT that will be linked to the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPGRAMS is web-based grievance redressal portal under Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances.
<p>Bharat Craft portal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an e-commerce portal planned by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), last year, for marketing of products manufactured by MSMEs in the country. However, it is yet to take off due to lack of a business plan, the unavailability of a technology partner, and shortage of funds.

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