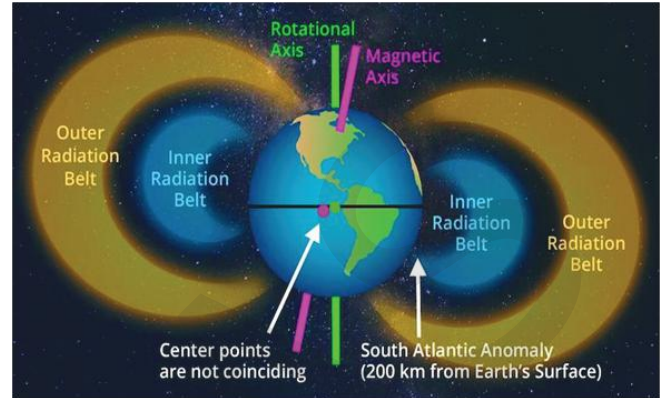


NEWS TODAY

NASA TRACKS 'SPLITTING DENT' IN EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD

- The dent, called the **South Atlantic Anomaly (SAA)**, is an **unusually weak spot in the Earth's Magnetic Field** that allows charged particles from Sun to dip closer to the Earth's surface than normal.
 - > It is observed over South America and the southern Atlantic Ocean.
- Recent data shows that **SAA is expanding westward and splitting into two lobes** which can result in weakening of magnetic field and **can impact**:
 - > **Low-Earth orbit satellites** that travel through SAA will get hit by solar particles which can result in a short circuit and further lead to permanent damage.
 - > **International Space Station**, which is in low-Earth orbit, instruments will also be impacted.
- **SAA arises from two features of Earth's core**: The tilt of its magnetic axis, and the flow of molten metals within its outer core.
 - > So far, **SAA degradation has not caused any visible impacts** on Earth's surface.
- Earth's magnetic field **acts like a protective shield around the planet**, repelling and trapping charged particles from the Sun.
 - > **Magnetic field of Earth is due to metallic and liquid outer core**, around 3,000 km below our feet.



PLASTIC POLLUTION IN ATLANTIC AT LEAST 10 TIMES WORSE THAN THOUGHT

- A new study has estimated **amount of microplastic pollution in Atlantic Ocean at 11.6-21.1 million tonnes**, much higher than determined previously.
 - > According to International Union for Conservation of Nature, **at least 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans every year** and makes up about 80% of all marine debris from surface waters to deep-sea sediments.
 - > **Microplastics** are plastic debris smaller than 5mm in length.
- **Pathways of plastic reaching oceans**:
 - > **Riverine and atmospheric transport** from coastal and inland areas,
 - > **Illegal dumping** activities and
 - > **Direct-at-sea littering** from shipping, fishing and aquaculture activities.
- **Harmful impacts of Plastic pollution**: Plastic can take hundreds to thousands of years to decompose; impacts marine life, ocean health, coastal tourism and even human health; gets into the human food chain etc.
- **Efforts at the international level**:
 - > 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention),
 - > 1978 Protocol to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

WORLD BANK RELEASES ITS BIENNIAL 'INDIA DEVELOPMENT UPDATE' REPORT

- Report finds that fiscal deficit will increase to 6.6% of GDP in FY20/21 and Debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to peak at around 89% in FY22/23.
 - > However, it suggests that India needs to **maintain reform momentum** to reverse current economic slowdown.
- **Suggestions**
 - > **Strengthening fiscal reforms**:
 - **Reassess subsidies** and generate more **non-tax revenues**
 - Evaluate **borrowing both domestically and externally**
 - Link repayment of new **borrowings to disinvestment receipts**.
 - > **Financial sector reforms**:
 - Strengthening of **financial sector safety nets**;
 - Regulatory and institutional framework for debt restructuring and insolvency
 - Institutionalizing recently launched **liquidity schemes for NBFCs**.
 - > **Deeper capital market reforms**: Revisiting investment guidelines for institutional investors to crowd in long-term finance and address asset liability mismatch issues.
 - > **Mainstreaming fintech** to close the gap in access to financial services and help firms, especially MSMEs, access much needed credit and liquidity.
 - > Gradually **scaling back statutory requirement** to provide priority-sector lending to reduce market distortions.
 - > **Social Protection**: Scaling up portable cash and insurance support for urban poor; fostering deeper accountability and institutional convergence for social protection.

CENTRE APPROVES NATIONAL RECRUITMENT AGENCY (NRA) FOR CONDUCTING A COMMON ELIGIBILITY TEST (CET)

- **Key features**
 - > To begin with CET **will cover recruitments (Group B and C non-technical posts) made by three agencies**: Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS). This will be expanded in a phased manner.
 - > **Separate CET will be conducted** each for three levels of graduate, higher secondary and matriculate candidates.
 - > **NRA will have representatives** of Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance, SSC, RRB & IBPS.
 - > **Scores of CET will be valid for 3 years** and candidates can appear again and the best score will be considered.
 - > It will be **conducted in 12 languages** and will be held once a year.
- **Benefits**
 - > **Eliminates multiple tests** and save precious time as well as resources.
 - > **Increase access to examination centres** especially for women candidates from rural areas & poor candidates as it will be **conducted in each district**.
 - > **Ease of selection, ease of job placement, ease of living and speedy recruitment**.








INDIAN ENERGY EXCHANGE (IEX) GETS CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION (CERC)'S NOD FOR 'GREEN MARKET'

- CERC has approved IEX's proposal for transactions in the **Green Term-Ahead Market (G-TAM) contracts**.
 - > G-TAM will provide an **exclusive platform for trading of renewables** and it would be the first physical trading of renewable energy (RE).
- Green market confers **recognition on a trade as 'green' power**.
 - > Thus, **obligated entities be able to discharge their 'renewable purchase obligations'** (RPO) by buying power from renewable energy companies in the exchange.
 - > Earlier, the obligated entities of the power from wind or a solar company **could not claim that he had met RPO**.
- Also, there will be **separate contracts for Solar and Non-Solar energy** to facilitate Solar and Non-Solar RPO fulfilment.
- **Benefit of this move**
 - > This, along with the recently launched real-time trading in electricity will **support seamless integration of RE power**.
 - > Help in **accomplishment of national green capacity targets** and facilitate consumers to make a choice.
- IEX (regulated by CERC) is the **first and largest energy exchange in India** providing a nationwide, automated trading platform for physical delivery of electricity, Renewable Energy Certificates and Energy Saving Certificates.

ALSO IN NEWS

<p>Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved FRP of sugarcane for 2020-21. • FRP is minimum price at which sugarcane is to be purchased by sugar mills from farmers. It is determined under Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966. • There is dual pricing mechanism for sugarcane: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > FRP is announced by central government at recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). > States can announce State Advised Prices, which are generally higher than FRP.
<p>Students Learning Enhancement Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines were released by Ministry of Education. • NCERT has prepared these guidelines to address the issues related to gaps and/or loss of learning among students, during and after the lockdown. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Also, these guidelines seek to help children who cannot access online learning, recommending ways to learn at home with their teachers or volunteers.
<p>First Snow leopard conservation Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be opened in Uttarkashi forest division in Uttarakhand. • Conservation centre will be built by Uttarakhand forest department along with United Nations Development Programme as part of its project, SECURE Himalayas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > SECURE Himalayas aims at securing livelihoods, conservation, sustainable use and restoration of high range Himalayan ecosystems. > The project also looks into conversation of snow leopards and other endangered species and their habitats, found in Himalayas. • IUCN status of snow leopard: Vulnerable
<p>Phuldungsai</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a village on the Tripura-Mizoram border and has found itself at the centre of a jurisdiction dispute between the two states. • Traditionally, Phuldungsai village council as a whole (despite eastern side falling in Mizoram) has been accepted as a part of Tripura. • Betlingchip, Tripura's highest peak, is in Phuldungsai and is a key tourist destination.
<p>Pinaka</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently the first ever pinaka rockets fully manufactured by the private sector have been successfully test fired by the army. • Pinaka is indigenous multibarrel rocket launch system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation. • Each Pinaka rocket is capable of carrying a 100kg payload for a range of 40km.
<p>Toxin in Hand sanitizer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Food and Drug Administration announced presence of 1-propanol in hand sanitizers. • 1-propanol is toxin that can depress the central nervous system and can be life-threatening if ingested. • 1-propanol is a primary alcohol and is used in the manufacture of products including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, rubbing alcohols, and other chemicals and commercial goods.
<p>Parkash Purab of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji celebrated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Parkash Purab marks installation of Guru Granth Sahib in Harmandir Sahib (Golden temple) in 1604. • Guru Granth Sahib is the central religious text of Sikhism which given the Guruship by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Guru Arjan Dev ji (5th Sikh guru), compiled Guru Nanak's (1st Sikh Guru) hymns along with four successors and other religious poets like Baba Farid, Ravidas and Kabir in the Adi Granth Sahib. • In late 17th century Guru Gobind Singh (10th & last Guru), included the compositions of Guru Tegh Bahadur (9th Guru), and this scripture was called the Guru Granth Sahib.
<p>Death Valley, USA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death Valley in California's Mojave Desert recorded one of the hottest air temperatures of 54.4 degree Celsius. • It is believed this is the hottest daytime temperature ever recorded, after previous records were shown to have errors. • At 282 feet below sea level, Death Valley is the lowest point in North America.

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