

# NEWS TODAY

## EARLY CENSUS & DELIMITATION KEY STEPS FOR WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL 2023

• This bill was recently passed in Lok Sabha.

- Bill provides that the **women's reservation will come into effect only after the delimitation exercise** taking into **account the data of the first census** conducted once the bill becomes a law.
- **Delimitation** means the **act or process of fixing limits or boundaries** of territorial constituencies in a country or a province having a legislative body.
- In India, **Article 82** provides for the **readjustment of the constituencies (number and boundaries)** of Lok Sabha and **State Assemblies** after every Census.
- The other articles which are related with delimitation are Articles 81, 170, 330, and 332.
- The 42nd Amendment froze this **delimitation exercise** until the **first Census** after **2000** is published.
  - In 2001, this was further extended for 25 years. So now, delimitation could happen on the results of the first Census after 2026.
  - Earlier, **the 2021 census exercise was postponed by the government** in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ABOUT DELIMITATION EXERCISE

- Conducted by an **independent delimitation commission (DC)** or a **Boundary Commission**.
- DC is **appointed by the President of India** under **Delimitation Commission Act**.
- **Composition:** A retired SC judge, the Chief Election Commissioner of India and respective State Election Commissioners.
- Decisions of DC are considered **final**, unchallengeable in any court.

## TRACKING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE 2023 GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT

• Released jointly by the **World Health Organization** and the **World Bank**.

- **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** means that **all people have access to a full range of quality health services** without financial hardship.
- UHC is **tracked using two indicators, under 2030 SDGs, viz.**
  - **UHC Service Coverage Index (SCI)** - Coverage of **essential health services**.
  - **Out-of-pocket health Expenditure (OOPE)** measuring **catastrophic health spending**.
- **Catastrophic OOPE** is defined as **out-of-pocket expenditure** on health **exceeding 10%** of a household budget.
- **Key highlights**
  - As of 2021, **over half** the world's population was **not fully covered by essential health services**.
  - **Catastrophic OOPE** has **risen to 13.5%** in 2019 from 9.6% in 2000.
    - It incurs **huge opportunity costs** in terms of **child education** and **basic human needs**.

### INDIA'S INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING UHC

**Ayushman Bharat and Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.**

**Universal Immunization Coverage.**

**National Health Policy 2017 etc.**

• **India's SCI score declined to 63** in 2021 from **64** in 2019 and **17.5% of people in India** suffer from **catastrophic OOPE**.

• **Recommendations:**

- Adopting a **primary healthcare approach**.
- **Expansion of essential services**, especially for Non-Communicable Diseases.
- Removing financial barriers e.g., issues of **indirect costs** and **co-payments** in health care.
- Strong commitments to **International Health Regulations** in acute public health risk.



# STATE OF WORKING INDIA 2023 REPORT BY AZIM PREMJI UNIVERSITY'S CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

- This report takes a long view of the **relationship between India's structural transformation and key social identities**.

- Apart from **caste, gender and religion**, there are **other crucial identities** that matter, including **ethnicity, race, linguistic background, sexual orientation** and others.
- Report highlights that **one's social identity** continues to play a **crucial role in determining one's opportunities**.

## • Highlights of Report:

- **Faster structural change:** Share of workers with regular wage or salaried work increased after 2004, going from 18% to **25% for men** and 10% to **25% for women in 2018**.
- **Increase in upward mobility:** Trend of casual employment of sons of casual wage workers decreased and incidence of better quality work increased. **Extent of such mobility was less for SCs/STs**.
- **Rarity of lower caste entrepreneurs:** Upper caste overrepresentation increases with firm size while SC and ST firm owners are under-represented.
- **Reduction in caste based segregation:** In waste management and sewerage, over-representation of SCs decreased over time but has **not been eliminated completely**.
- **Gender norms drive the employment of women.** Where the husband's earnings are high, the probability of the wife being employed is low.

## LIQUIDITY DEFICIT IN THE BANKING SYSTEM WIDENED TO ₹1.46 TRILLION, HIGHEST SINCE 2019

- **Liquidity** is a measure of **cash and other liquid assets available** with **banks** to meet demands upon it.

- It usually consists of **central bank reserves** and **government bonds**.
- **RBI controls liquidity in banking system** through a **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF)**.
- LAF is operated through **Repo auctions (for absorption of liquidity)** and **Reverse Repo auctions (for injection of liquidity)**.
- **Additional instruments for liquidity management:** Marginal standing facility, Statutory Liquidity ratio, etc.

- In banking system **Liquidity deficit** means banks **do not have sufficient funds** for **credit demands** by customers.

## • Reasons Behind Liquidity Deficit

- **Implementation of Incremental Cash Reserve Ratio (ICRR):** RBI mandated banks to set aside an additional **10% net demand** and time liabilities to absorb surplus liquidity.
- **Payments of advance tax and GST by businesses:** hence **shift of liquidity** away from banking sector.
- **Other: Selling of dollars** by RBI, **increase in credit demand** due to the festive season, etc.

## • Implication of Liquidity Deficit

- rise in **interest rates** for **consumers**.
- rise in rates of **Treasury bills Repurchase**, overnight **call money rates**, etc.
- **less availability of credit** for **developmental activities**.

## THREE YEARS OF THE ABRAHAM ACCORD

- Accord is a normalization agreement signed between **UAE, Bahrein** and **Israel** to establish **formal diplomatic relations** and was brokered by **USA** in 2020.

- Later, **Sudan and Morocco** also joined accord.

- Accord aimed for **normalisation of ties, bringing Israel closer to the Gulf nations** that shared common values and mutual interests, and taking forward the peace initiative.

- **Before the accord**, Israel relations ranged from overt hostility (e.g., Sudan) to no relations (e.g., the UAE and Bahrain), etc.

## • Impacts of Abraham Accords:

- **Trade and commerce** of Israel and other West Asian countries **increased 74%** between 2021 and 2022.

- **New joint ventures** in critical sectors such as clean energy, health, innovation etc

- **Deeper people-to-people ties, Integrating region**, etc.

## • Benefit of Accords for India

- **Ease the travel** due to direct flights between these countries.

- **Commercial collaborations** between companies from these countries with the Indian private sector.

- **I2U2 (Israel, India, UAE, U.S.) Group** was established in 2021 which became possible due to these accords.

- An **international forum to discuss common areas** of mutual interest, strengthen economic partnership in trade and investment in respective regions and beyond.

- Referred as '**West Asian QUAD**'



# NMC GETS WORLD FEDERATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION (WFME) RECOGNITION FOR 10 YEARS

● **National Medical Commission (NMC)** is India's regulatory body overseeing medical education and practice.

➤ It is a **statutory body**, constituted by **NMC Act, 2019**.

● **WFME**, established in **1972**, is a **not-for-profit global organization dedicated to enhancing the quality** of medical education worldwide.

➤ **Founding Organisation: World Health Organization** and **World Medical Association**.

● **WFME** grants recognition Status to **individual accrediting agencies** that meet **WFME recognition criteria**.

## ● Benefits

➤ It will enable **Indian medical graduates to pursue postgraduate training** in other countries that require WFME recognition, e.g., the United States, Canada, etc.

➤ All the **706 existing medical colleges** in India will **become WFME accredited**.

➤ **New medical colleges** that will be set up in the next **10 years** will **automatically** get accredited.

➤ It will enhance the **quality** and **standards** of medical education in India.

➤ **Aligning medical education** with **global best practices** and benchmarks.

➤ Make **India an attractive destination** for international students.

## ALSO IN NEWS



### Asia Pacific Forum (APF)

● **President of India inaugurated** Annual General Meeting and Biennial Conference of the APF on Human Rights in New Delhi.

#### ● About APF

➤ Established in **1996**, it is a **coalition of 26 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)** (presently Afghanistan is suspended) from all corners of Asia Pacific region.

➤ **Members:** 17 full members and eight associate members (**India** is full member since 1996)

- To be admitted as a full member, a NHRI must fully comply with the minimum international standards set out in the Paris Principles.



### Asian Premium

● Saudi Arabia, the world's second largest oil producer, has slashed the premium charged on exports to India.

● **Asian premium** is an extra amount levied by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from Asian countries above the actual selling price.

● It is believed to be discriminatory pricing mechanism **that Asia pays higher prices for crude oil exported from the Middle East** relative to their counterparts in Europe and the US.

➤ Also Asian countries, dependent heavily on oil imports, are essentially price-takers here.



### SIMBEX

● **Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX)** is an **annual bilateral naval exercise** between **India** and **Singapore**.



### Agumbe forest

● The amount of rainfall received in Agumbe has reduced as compared to the other towns in the region.

● **Agumbe is in the Shivamogga district of Karnataka** and referred as "**Cherrapunji of South India**", with an average **rainfall of 8000 mm**

➤ It is **situated at an elevation of 650 meters** within Central Western Ghats and has a **distinctive tract of tropical moist evergreen forest**.

➤ It is also located **adjacent to the Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary** and the **Kudremukh National Park**.

● It is the world's only **natural habitat of the King Cobra** and referred as "**The Cobra Capital**"



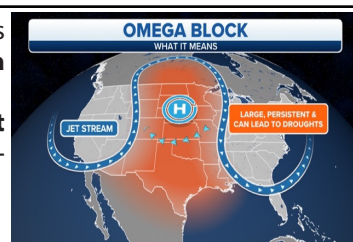
### Omega blocking

● According to a study, recent **floods in the Mediterranean** regions were caused by low-pressure systems forming around an **Omega Block** centered over the Netherlands.

● Omega block occurs when **two low-pressure systems become cut off from the main flow of the jet stream**, sandwiching a high-pressure system between them.

● It **resembles the Greek letter  $\Omega$**  on a weather map.

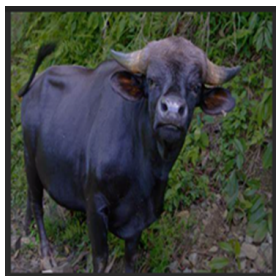
● Omega blocking events have also been **linked to other extreme weather events in the past**, including Pakistan floods in 2011, 2019 heatwaves during May in France and July in Germany etc.





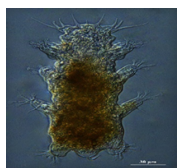
### Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

- Tungareshwar Sanctuary is situated in the **Vasai-Virar area of the Thane district, Maharashtra**.
  - **Spread over 85 sq.km**, it forms a **corridor between Sanjay Gandhi National Park** (also known as Borivali National Park) and **Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- It is home to famous **Tungareshwar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva**.
- The sanctuary's diverse habitats including littoral forests and hills, which are home to **leopards, wild boars, barking deer, langurs, bonnet and rhesus macaques**, among other animals.
- **Sanctuary is home to numerous birds** including the Crested Serpent-eagle, Jungle Owlet, White-eyed Buzzard, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Emerald Dove and Heart-spotted Woodpecker.



Mithun

- **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India** has recognised the Mithun (*Bos frontalis*) as a food animal.
- **Food Animals** are those that are **raised** and used for **food production or consumption by humans**.
- **About Mithun**
  - **Species:** Ruminant species of Bovidae family.
  - **Habitat:** **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland**, Manipur, and Mizoram. Also found in parts of Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan.
  - **State animal:** of both Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.
  - **Similar** to that of **Gaur (Indian bison)** but are smaller in size.
- **Categorization** can help **check its declining population**.
- Earlier in 2022, **Himalayan yak was accepted as a food animal** by FSSAI.



Batillipes Kalami

- Researchers named a **new species of marine tardigrade** after **former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**.
- **Tardigrades (Water Bears)**, are **microscopic** eight-legged animals.
  - **Belong to species** known as **extremophiles** (survive in extreme conditions, **up to 30 years without food or water**).
  - **Under Extreme conditions**, they go into a state of suspended animation **called the "tun" state**—in which the body dries out and appears as a lifeless ball (or tun).
- **Diet:** plants.
- Few tardigrades are **predatory carnivores**.
- It is also observed in **ecosystems other than aquatic ecosystem**.



RNA (ribonucleic acid) study of Tasmanian tiger

- In a **First**, researchers have sequenced **RNA from any extinct species**.
- **Tasmanian tiger (known as the thylacine)** was a **dog-sized striped carnivorous marsupial** inhabited in Australia and adjacent islands.
- **RNA, like Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)**, carries **genetic information and plays a crucial role in protein synthesis**. While DNA contains an organism's genetic code.
  - RNA carries **genetic information** it receives from the DNA, synthesizing **proteins that an organism requires** to live and **regulating cell metabolism**.
- **Benefits:**
  - information on **metabolism regulation** of species.
  - help in **understanding causes of past pandemics**.



### Supercontinent

- According to study, the **pink diamonds** arrived on the surface **around 1.3 billion years ago** due to the breakup of **Earth's first supercontinent (Vaalbara)**.
- **Supercontinent** is a large landmass that accounts for the vast majority of Earth's land.
  - **Pink diamonds** are **formed** when they are subjected to **intense forces** from **colliding tectonic plates**, as they twist and bend their crystal lattices (geometric arrangement).
  - As per study, **Western and Northern Australia collided**, turning the **once-colourless diamonds into pink**.
- Australia (Argyle mine) **accounts for more than 90 % of pink stones**.