



The High Cost of Cheap Water: World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) report on World Food Day

Key highlights

- There is a lack of awareness and understanding of the importance of water resources, the report refers to it as **water blindness**.
- In 2021, the estimated global economic value of water was around **US\$58 trillion, equivalent to 60% of the world's GDP**.
 - Direct economic benefits**, such as water consumption for households, irrigation amount to \$7.5 trillion annually.
 - Indirect economic benefits** such as purifying water, enhancing soil health, amount to \$50 trillion annually.
- Key threats to freshwater ecosystems**
 - Overexploitation of water** particularly by agriculture (responsible for 70 % of freshwater usage globally).
 - Climate change** disrupts the hydrological cycle and reduces water availability.
 - Water pollution by human activities** like use of fertilizers, microplastics.
 - Flow modification & fragmentation** by Infrastructure like dams and river diversions.

Recommendations

- Government should**
 - Restore and protect vital freshwater ecosystems:** Revitalize 30% of Degraded Rivers and Wetlands by 2030.
 - End Harmful Subsidies** in agriculture and energy.
- Industry and business should**
 - Evaluate and reveal water risks** from scarcity, pollution, and floods.
 - Implement water-saving technologies** and advanced treatment to minimize wastewater generation.
- Financial institutions should** Invest in Nature-based Solutions for climate adaptation.


World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)


- Genesis:** Established in 1961
- About:** International non-governmental organization working in the field of wildlife preservation.
- Function:** it works around six areas: food, climate, freshwater, wildlife, forests, and oceans.
- Report:** **Living Planet Report** (publishes every two years)

Supreme Court Referred Pleas Challenging Electoral Bond Scheme To Constitution Bench of Five Judges

- Finance Bill 2017 introduced electoral bonds as **interest-free bearer instruments (like Promissory Notes)** which are available for purchase from specified branches of the State Bank of India.
- Electoral Bonds would have **a life of only 15 days** during which it can be used for making donations only to the **political parties**:
 - Registered under section 29A** of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951 and
 - Which secured not less than 1%** of the votes polled in the last general election to the House of the People or a Legislative Assembly.
- Bonds are issued in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 cr.
- A citizen of India or a body incorporated in India** will be eligible to purchase the bond.
- Issues with the electoral bonds**
 - Obscure the funding system as the **identity of donors purchasing them remains a secret**.
 - Infringed upon the citizen's fundamental 'Right to Know'.**
- Election Commission in 2019 opposed the anonymity of the scheme** as it has a serious impact on transparency in political funding.

Article 145(3) deals with the rules of the court and provides for the setting up of a **Constitution Bench**.

The telecom license fee is capital in nature: SC

- The SC emphasized that **terminology and payment methods are irrelevant** in determining the payment's nature.
- It set aside the **Delhi HC order that categorized license fees** before and **after July 31, 1999**, differently, as **capital expenditure (Capex) and revenue expenditure**.
 - ⊕ **Capex is an expense incurred to buy, maintain or improve fixed assets** eg. buildings, vehicles, etc.
 - ⊕ **Revenue expenditures are expenses to meet the operational costs of a business** eg. rent, utilities, property taxes, etc.
- **Background of the issue**
 - ⊕ **According to National Telecom Policy 1999**, telecom firms were mandated to pay a one-time license fee for entry and an annual license fee linked to **their Annual Gross Revenue (AGR)**.
 - ⊕ **Income Tax Authorities implied** that the annual Licence fee be included in the Capex, the **companies included them in revenue expenditure**.
- **Implication of the Judgement**
 - ⊕ It will disallow **licence fees as a revenue expense** for the calculation of taxes.
 - ◆ Revenue expenses are deducted from the revenue of the company to arrive at the profit for a period.
 - ⊕ **Increase in Tax liabilities** for telecom companies.
 - ⊕ **Retrospective liabilities** on the companies as the taxes are to be paid since 1999.

About AGR

- According to the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) AGR includes all revenues from both telecom and non-telecom services.
- Earlier the companies included only the revenue from telecom services but SC in 2019 affirmed the DoT definition.
- It is also used for calculating spectrum usage charges.

Palliative care is a way to reduce financial distress

- As per WHO, Palliative care enhances the quality of life for patients and their families dealing with **life-threatening illnesses like cancers**, complications of diabetes etc.
 - ⊕ The global need for palliative care will continue to grow as a result of the **ageing of populations and the rising burden of non-communicable diseases and some communicable diseases**.
 - ⊕ It is estimated that in India **5.4 million people a year need palliative care**.
- Early delivery of palliative care **reduces unnecessary hospital admissions and the use of health services**.
- **Challenges in Palliative Care in India:**
 - ⊕ **Low awareness about palliative care** among healthcare workers and the public.
 - ⊕ Palliative care is **not covered by most insurance schemes** in India.
 - ⊕ **Inadequate funding** and lack of availability in public health centres.
 - ⊕ **Restrictive regulations for morphine and other essential controlled palliative medicines** deny access to adequate palliative care.
- **Government Initiatives:**
 - ⊕ The **National Program for Palliative Care (NPPC)**, a component of the National Health Mission was launched in 2012.
 - ⊕ **Only three states** have implemented the palliative care policy - Kerala, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.

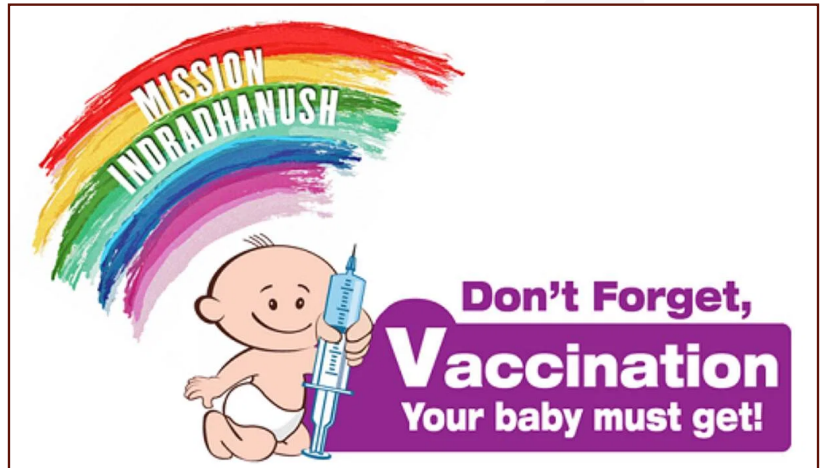
Supreme Court (SC) upholds rights of an Unborn child

- The SC had **turned down the plea of a pregnant woman** seeking termination of her 27-week-old **pregnancy** as the **foetus was viable** as per the medical board reports.
 - ⊕ The case **highlights the pro-life versus pro-choice debate** in the SC, where **the rights of the unborn child** were weighed **against the choice of a woman to have a child**.
- **The ruling upheld** the provisions of the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act (MTPA), 2021** as there are **no provisions for the termination of a viable foetus** after 24 weeks.
- **Key Provisions of MTPA 2021**

Duration of Pregnancy	Procedure for Termination
Up to 20 weeks	➤ Available to all women on the advice of one doctor
20-24 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The right to seek abortion is determined by two registered medical practitioners under certain categories. ➤ Rule 3B of the Rules under the MTP Act lists categories of forced pregnancies which include survivors of sexual assault or rape; minors, women with disabilities; or change in marital status during pregnancy etc.
Beyond 24 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Available only on the grounds of foetal abnormalities based on the advice of a medical board. ➤ All state/ UTs are mandated to constitute a Medical Board consisting of gynaecologists, paediatrician, etc.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Concluded All 3 Rounds of Intensified Mission Indradhanush 5.0 (IMI 5.0) Campaign

- **All States/UTs except** Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Punjab concluded all 3 rounds.
- **About the IMI 5.0 campaign**
 - ⊕ **Aims** to enhance immunization coverage for all vaccines provided under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) as per the National Immunization Schedule (NIS).
 - ⊕ It ensures that **routine immunization services** reach the missed-out and dropped-out children and pregnant women across the country.
 - ⊕ It is being conducted **across all the districts in the country and includes children up to 5 years of age** (Previous campaigns included children up to 2 years).
 - ⊕ **Special focus** is on improvement of **Measles and Rubella vaccination coverage** to eliminate them by 2023.
 - ⊕ It leverages the **U-WIN digital platform** for Routine Immunization in a pilot mode.
- **Mission Indradhanush** was launched in 2014 as a special catch-up campaign under the UIP, to cover the **partially and unvaccinated children**.
 - ⊕ A total of **5.06 crore children and 1.25 crore pregnant women** have been cumulatively vaccinated till date.
- **UIP provides free vaccines against 12 life-threatening diseases** like TB, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis B, Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (only in endemic districts), etc.



Also in News



2+2 dialogue

- India and the UK held their first 2+2 dialogue.
- **About 2+2 dialogue**
 - ⊕ It is a **format of meeting on the foreign and defense aspects** by India and its allies on strategic and security issues.
 - ⊕ It involves discussion either at the level of **senior officials or ministers**.
 - ⊕ It **enables the partners to better understand** and appreciate each other's strategic concerns and sensitivities **while building a strategic relationship**.
 - ⊕ **India has already established 2+2 dialogues** with the US, Australia, Japan, and Russia.



Tilapia parvovirus

- **India's first tilapia parvovirus was reported in Tamil Nadu.**
- It is affecting **farm-bred tilapia**, a freshwater fish species, and causing a huge mortality rate.
 - ⊕ Mozambique tilapia was introduced to Indian freshwater bodies in the 1950s.
 - ⊕ **Capable of surviving in low-oxygen levels in water**, the fish has turned invasive across the country.
- **Tilapia parvovirus (TiPV)** is a single-stranded DNA virus.
- The discovery of TiPV in India is the third known occurrence after China (2019) and Thailand (2021).
 - ⊕ Currently **no vaccine is available against TiPV**.



Indian rupee valuation

- The Indian Rupee depreciated against the US dollar to a **record new low of ₹83.27 to a US dollar**.
 - ⊕ **Rising Crude Oil Prices and Weakness in other Asian Currencies** are attributed to be the reason for current trend.
 - ⊕ **Other reasons for depreciation:** trade imbalances, budget deficits, inflation, global fuel prices, economic crises, etc.
 - ⊕ **Effects of weak rupee:** It will increase the cost of imports, inflation, increase in liabilities for companies with overseas debts, valuation loss of forex reserves, etc.



Ayushman Bhav Campaign

- **Initiative of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**
- **Objective:** To extend comprehensive healthcare coverage to every village and town.
- **It has 3 components:**
 - ⊕ **Ayushman Apke Dwar 3.0:** To provide Ayushman cards to remaining eligible beneficiaries enrolled under the PM-JAY scheme.
 - ⊕ **Ayushman Melas:** To facilitate the creation of Health IDs and issuance of Ayushman Bharat Cards.
 - ⊕ **Ayushman Sabhas:** To raise awareness about vital health schemes and disease conditions.
- NGOs, SHGs, PRIs, Youth groups, Primary cooperative societies, Indian Medical Association and companies using CSR funds, will be part of the campaign.



Rafah crossing

- Rafah crossing is the southernmost post of exit from the **Gaza Strip (Palestine)** and borders with **Egypt's Sinai peninsula**.
- **Two other border crossings** from and into the Gaza Strip which are closed
 - ⊕ **Erez**, a crossing for people with Israel in northern Gaza.
 - ⊕ **Kerem Shalom**, a solely commercial goods junction with Israel in southern Gaza.
- **Significance of Rafah crossing:** It is now the only crossing point for humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.



Paclitaxel (Taxol) and Antibody-Drug Conjugates (ADCs)

- **About Taxol**
 - ⊕ Taxol is a **chemotherapy drug** derived from the bark of the **Pacific yew tree**.
 - ⊕ it is used to treat different cancers in ovaries, breasts, lungs, etc.
- **About ADCs**
 - ⊕ They are novel drugs that exploit the specificity of a **monoclonal antibody (mAb)** to reach target antigens expressed on cancer cells.
 - ◆ mAb are proteins **made in a laboratory meant to stimulate our immune system**.
 - ⊕ They deliver **chemotherapy agents to cancer cells**.
 - ⊕ After binding to the target, the ADC releases a **cytotoxic drug into the cancer cell**.



International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)

- **IIPS was established in July 1956** under the joint sponsorship of **Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, the Indian Government and the UN & formerly known as the Demographic Training and Research Centre till 1970**.
- It is an autonomous organization of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
 - ⊕ It was declared as a "**Deemed to be University**" in 1985, under UGC Act, 1956.
- The objective of the Institute is **to train persons from India and other countries in demography and related fields**.
- IIPS is the nodal agency, responsible for providing coordination and technical guidance for the National Family Health Survey.



New Sports in Olympics 2028

- **Five sports are included in the 2028 Los Angeles Games** after gaining the approval of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- **Each host city**, under IOC rules, can request the inclusion of several sports for their edition of the Games.
- **Games included**
 - ⊕ **Twenty20 cricket** - Cricket has been played in the Olympics only once before, in Paris in 1900, when England defeated France.
 - ⊕ **Others:** baseball/softball, Flag football (non-contact American football), squash, and lacrosse.

Places in News



Ecuador (Capital : Quito)

- Daniel Noboa, 35, was **elected Ecuador's youngest president**.
- **Political Boundaries**
 - ⊕ Ecuador is a republic in northwestern South America.
 - ⊕ Bordered by **Columbia and Peru**.
 - ⊕ **Pacific Ocean** located on west side.
- **Geographical Features**
 - ⊕ Situated on **Equator** from which its name derives.
 - ⊕ **Cotopaxi** in the **Andes Mountains** is one of the **highest active volcanoes** in the world.
 - ⊕ **Significant oil reserves** and is one of **South America's top oil producers**.
 - ⊕ **Highest Peak** : Chimborazo
 - ⊕ **Major rivers** : Napo, Pastaza, etc.



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR