

75 percentage of Indian districts that are off target for crucial Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators like poverty, stunting and wasting of children, anaemia, child marriage, partner violence, tobacco use, and contraceptive use. According to a study in The Lancet, India is not on target for over 50% of the indicators related to health for the 2030 deadline.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) stumbled upon a 1,300-year-old stupa right in the middle of a mining site in Odisha's Jajpur district from where Khondalite stones were supplied for the beautification project around the 12th century Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri.

Karnataka is currently the State with the best equipped power systems to transition its electricity system from being fossil powered to renewable energy sources, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, says an analysis by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and Ember on Monday. As part of its international obligations, India has committed to generating about half of its electricity from non-fossil fuel sources and reducing the emissions intensity of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 45% by 2030. Achieving this is predicated on States tweaking their infrastructure used to deliver electricity, to efficiently accommodate inputs from multiple power sources such as solar, wind, hydropower and existing fossil fuel sources.

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is using in-house artificial intelligence (AI) technology to improve the "robustness" of fingerprint authentication, according to a press release issued on Monday. The UIDAI said this effort was being undertaken to reduce "spoofing attempts", where duplicates of a fingerprint were being used to carry out Aadhaar transactions improperly. "The artificial intelligence and machine learning-based security mechanism developed in-house is now using a combination of both fingerprint minutia[e] and finger image to check the liveness of the finger print captured," the release said.

On February 23, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Moscow was unilaterally suspending the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty with the U.S., stating that the West was trying to destroy Russia. While both Moscow and Washington were aggressive in their one-upmanship of expanding nuclear arsenals in the initial decades of the Cold War, they have engaged in rocky bilateral talks and have signed multiple treaties to shrink and keep checks on each other's nuclear arsenals. Since Mr. Putin has not withdrawn from the treaty and just 'suspended' it, analysts are saying the move would not immediately trigger an arms race between the two powers. It could be a part of Russia's political messaging amid the West's massive assistance to Ukraine amid the year-long conflict.

The Delhi High Court on Monday upheld the validity of the Centre's Agnipath

FIRST G20 FINANCE MINISTERS AND CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS (FMCBG) MEETING CONCLUDED TO ADDRESS DEBT VULNERABILITIES

1. FMCBG meeting under India's Presidency concluded with issuance of G20 Chair's summary and Outcome Document. Addressing debt vulnerabilities in low and middle-income countries like Ghana, Sri Lanka, Zambia and Ethiopia was an important outcome of FMCBG (refer image for more details). If left unaddressed, it could trigger global recession and push millions to extreme poverty.
2. **About Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond DSSI** - It is an agreement of G20 and Paris Club countries to coordinate and cooperate on debt treatments for up to 73 low-income countries that are eligible for DSSI. It includes G20 official bilateral creditors as well like China, India, Turkey, or Saudi Arabia that are not members of Paris Club.
3. It provides a deep debt restructuring, with a reduction in net present value of debt sufficient to restore sustainability, if requested by debtor country.
4. Paris Club is an informal group of creditor nations whose objective is to find workable solutions to payment problems faced by debtor nations. It has 22 permanent members. India and China are not its members.

AMAZON JOINS OPEN NETWORK OF DIGITAL COMMERCE (ONDC)

1. Amazon will integrate its logistics network and its software suite called Smart Commerce with ONDC. Smart Commerce is an Amazon Web Services-powered suite of SaaS (Software as a service) products that enables MSMEs in India to build and scale their business across digital mediums and will have enablers for onboarding to ONDC network.
2. ONDC was launched by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to control digital monopolies. It promotes open networks for all aspects of exchange of goods and services over digital or electronic networks. Task to integrate e-commerce platforms on ONDC has been assigned to Quality Council of India.
3. **Significance of ONDC**- Democratization and decentralization of e-commerce. Wider access for sellers especially to kirana store owners. Provide consumers the liberty to choose their preferred local businesses.
4. **Challenges with ONDC**- Growth in seller base will not necessarily improve buyer experience on network. Switching customers from incumbents, which are offering a satisfactory service, will be difficult. Lack of clarity on accountability, especially in addressing customer complaints and returns.

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER NEW LAYER AT EARTH'S INNER CORE

1. Discovered by Australian National University seismologists, the new layer is a solid metallic ball is deep inside inner core of Earth, dubbed as "innermost inner core". It is solid due to high pressure deep within the Earth that stops iron alloy from melting. It is a crystallized structure within inner core's innermost region that is different from outer layer.
2. First hypothesized about 20 years ago, it was identified through data gathered from seismic waves caused by earthquakes. So far, four layers of Earth's structure had been identified (refer image).
3. **This includes: Crust**: Topmost or outermost layer of earth which makes up 1% of Earth Volume. It has two parts - thinner Oceanic Crust and thicker Continental Crust. **Mantle**: Solid/plastic layer of earth which makes up about 84% of Earth Volume. It is divided in two parts - Upper Mantle and Lower Mantle.
4. Uppermost mantle and crust constitute lithosphere. **Outer core**: Liquid portion of core, composed of 80% iron along with nickel and some other lighter elements. **Inner core**: Solid portion of core, composed of Iron and nickel with presence of heavy elements like gold, platinum, palladium, silver and tungsten.

KERALA TO USE ROBOTICS TECH EXTENSIVELY FOR MANHOLE CLEANING

1. Kerala to use robotics technology for cleaning all its commissioned manholes by pressing into service the robotic scavenger Bandicoot in temple town of Guruvayur. Bandicoot Robot, world's first robotic scavenger, developed as a Make in India and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan initiative by Kerala-based Genrobotics.
2. It has waterproof, HD vision cameras and gas sensors that identifies harmful gases inside manhole. Recently, Bandicoot had bagged 'Kerala Pride' award. Manual scavenging is the practice of removing human excreta by hand from sewers or septic tank.

scheme for recruitment in the Armed Forces. Dismissing a bunch of petitions challenging the scheme, the court said it has been introduced in national interest.

\$4.3 billion, the amount the UN is seeking to alleviate the suffering of millions of people in Yemen, where an eight-year civil war has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Yemen's conflict started in 2014, when the Iran backed rebel Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of the country's north. The conflict has become a regional proxy war.

62 death toll from Italy's migrant tragedy where an overloaded boat sank early Sunday in the stormy seas off Italy's southern Calabria region. Many of the victims were Afghans, including members of large families, as well as Pakistanis and Iraqis. Italy is a prime destination for migrant smugglers.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni will visit India on March 2 and 3, along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajan and a high powered business delegation, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Monday. Ms. Meloni will be the chief guest and keynote speaker at the 8th Raisina Dialogue. This is the first prime ministerial visit from Italy in five years.

The growing confrontation between the Western countries and the Russia China combine is overshadowing the government's plans for the G-20 and the Raisina Dialogue of the Ministry of External Affairs this week. Officials concede that after the public spat at the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meeting over the weekend, a joint statement at the G-20 Foreign Ministers' meeting looks unlikely for now.

The Supreme Court on Monday said India cannot "remain a prisoner of the past" with its history of invasions being constantly dug up and served on the plate of the present and future generations to "keep the country on the boil". "History of a nation cannot haunt the present and future generations of a nation, so that succeeding generations become prisoners of the past," a Bench of Justices K.M. Joseph and B.V. Nagarathna said.

Bank credit growth slowed down to 16.8% in the October December 2022 period from a year earlier, RBI data showed. This compares with 17.2% seen in the previous quarter, according to the quarterly statistics on bank deposits and credit, released by the Reserve Bank of India on Monday A year earlier, credit growth was 8.4%.

3. India under Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act (PEMSR), 2013 banned the use of any individual for manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta till its disposal.
4. Reasons for prevalence of manual scavenging: Lack of enforcement of PEMS, poor rehabilitation scheme, indifferent attitude of society etc.
5. **Steps taken to tackle manual scavenging-** National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) initiative by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS). Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

FIRST SYNCHRONIZED VULTURE SURVEY BY KERALA, TAMIL NADU AND KARNATAKA

1. Synchronized Vulture Survey-2023 involved Wildlife Conservation Foundation (an NGO) and forest departments of three states to survey vultures in Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, and all other forests in Karnataka. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS), Kerala. Mudumalai National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu. Synchronized survey is to avoid duplication of data when surveys are conducted at different time periods. Vulture, also known as condors, is a large bird of prey with over 20 species in world.
2. Nine species of vultures are found in India with Himalayas, Rajasthan, Gange Plain and north side of Indian subcontinent as main geographic ranges (refer image for species and their IUCN status). Out of 9, 3 species are migratory (cinereous vulture, griffon vulture and Himalayan vulture).
3. Considered to be the most efficient scavengers, they have a unique and important ecological role, as they prevent spread of diseases from rotting corpse.
4. **Threats:** Population decline due to exposure to drug diclofenac; Electrocutation, Illegal wildlife trade and hunting, etc.
5. **Vulture Conservation Initiatives-** Ban on Veterinary use of Diclofenac in 2006. Action Plan for Vulture Conservation prevent species extinction. In-situ conservation programmes like promoting vulture restaurants, satellite tagging of vultures etc.

INTERNAL TRADE IN INDIA

1. India on the move: An examination of the volume and direction of internal trade in India' paper was released by Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister (EAC-PM).
2. **Key Highlights-** Interstate trade flows in India amount to 69% of GDP, when domestic movement of import goods are included and about 35% of GDP, when only domestically produced goods are taken into account.
3. Internal trade appears to be growing at more than twice the pace of growth of GDP. In terms of net trade balance, some smaller states/UTs like Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Uttarakhand and Sikkim were net internal exporters.

TRENDS IN MATERNAL MORTALITY 2000 TO 2020 REPORT

1. It was released by World Health Organisation. Maternal Mortality Ratio is maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Key highlights Maternal mortality declined by 34 % between 2000 and 2020.
2. Every day in 2020, approximately 800 women died from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth i.e., a woman dies around every two minutes. In 2020, about 70% of all maternal deaths were in sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.1 aims to reduce maternal mortality to less than 70 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births by 2030.



"If you have self-belief, you have nothing more to believe."

Dr. Khan
(KSG)