

There is an urgent need to create a new and dedicated fund to help developing countries successfully implement a post-2020 global framework to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, India has said at the U.N. biodiversity conference in Canada's Montreal. The country said that conservation of biodiversity must also be based on common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR) as climate change also impacts nature. As the 196 parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) finalise negotiations for a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) — a new set of goals and targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss — there have been repeated calls for the inclusion of the CBDR principle in finance-related targets.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Union government had been investing heavily in Northeast India with his government's motto being "Act fast for northeast and act first for northeast." Addressing the golden jubilee celebration of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Meghalaya's capital, Shillong, he said the Centre was spending ₹7 lakh crore in the region now as against ₹2 lakh crores after India's Independence. Established in 1971 and formally inaugurated in 1972, the NEC is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the north eastern region comprising eight States.

Intelligence agencies have alerted the Tamil Nadu police to the alleged attempts being made by the CPI (Maoist) to revive its Western Ghats Special Zonal Committee. The Maoists considered the base — located in the trijunction forests of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala — strategic to regain strongholds in the area and take forward their agenda.

The 48th GST Council meeting was held on December 17. The GST Council chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recommended to decriminalise certain offences under Section 132 of the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act, 2017. While Sections 122 to 131 of the CGST Act of 2017 contain provisions relating to penalties, Sections 132 to 138 contains provisions relating to prosecution and compounding. The amount of tax evaded, the amount of Input Tax Credit (ITC) improperly claimed or used, or the amount of refund improperly claimed determines the length of the prison sentence.

Imposing penal provisions in an ambiguous ecosystem significantly alters how businesses perceive risk and uncertainty, directly impacting their ability to conduct business. The law already contains sufficient penalties that serve as a deterrent against tax evasion. Investors may be discouraged by the fear of criminal sanctions in small, trivial, and petty matters, even before their engagement in any business activity or investment.

LAW ON ACID ATTACKS IN INDIA

1. A 17-year-old girl was recently attacked with an acid-like substance in Delhi while she was on her way to school.
2. **Background:** According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, there were 150 such cases recorded in 2019, 105 in 2020 and 102 in 2021. West Bengal and UP generally account for nearly 50% of all cases in the country year on year. The charge sheeting rate of acid attacks stood at 89% and the conviction rate at 20% in 2021. In 2015, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued an advisory to all states to ensure speedy justice in cases of acid attacks by expediting prosecution.
3. **The law on acid attacks:** Until 2013, acid attacks were not treated as separate crimes. However, acid attacks were put under a separate section (326A) of the IPC and made punishable with a minimum imprisonment of 10 years which is extendable to life along with a fine. The law also has provisions for punishment for denial of treatment to victims or police officers refusing to register an FIR. Denial of treatment can lead to imprisonment of up to one year and dereliction of duty by a police officer is punishable by imprisonment of up to two years.
4. **The law on the regulation of acid sales:** In 2013, the SC took cognizance of acid attacks and passed an order on the regulation of sales of corrosive substances. As a result, the MHA issued an advisory to all states on how to regulate acid sales and framed the Model Poisons Possession and Sale Rules, 2013 under The Poisons Act, 1919.
5. **Victim compensation and care: Based on SC directions, the MHA asked states** – To make sure acid attack victims are paid compensation of at least Rs. 3 lakhs (Rs 1 lakh within 15 days and Rs 2 lakh within 2 months thereafter) by the concerned State Government/UT. To provide free treatment to acid attack victims in any hospital, public or private. To earmark 1-2 beds in private hospitals for the treatment of underprivileged victims of acid attacks. To extend social integration programs to the victims for which NGOs could be funded to look after their rehabilitative requirements.

INDIA'S FIRST 5-G ENABLED AUTO MANUFACTURING UNIT

1. Bharti Airtel and Tech Mahindra have announced a strategic partnership under which they have deployed a "5G for Enterprise" Solution i.e., a 'captive private network' at Mahindra and Mahindra's Chakan facility in Maharashtra, making it India's first 5G-enabled auto manufacturing unit. The partnership is in line with Tech Mahindra's NXT.NOWTM framework, which aims to enhance the "Human Centric Experience", focuses on investing in emerging technologies and solutions that enable digital transformation and meet the evolving needs of the customer. As the industry 4.0 paradigm gathers momentum, reliable data networks will prove to be a key differentiator in factory and manufacturing performances.
2. **About 5G:** The fifth generation of mobile networks, or 5G, is what comes after the 2G, 3G, and 4G generations. 5G is expected to deliver substantially higher connection speeds.
3. **About private 5G network:** Also called a captive non-public network (CNPN), it is a network that is set up solely for a firm's own use. Unlike a public network, it is closed to external communication. The network relies on high-frequency, low-wavelength airwaves and is therefore ideal for institutions like factories, manufacturing plants, hospitals, universities etc.
4. **Significance of the move:** Airtel and Tech Mahindra's partnership shows the opportunity for collaboration between telcos and private enterprises. How will the private 5G network work at the Chakan plant? Improved speeds for software flashing – a critical operation for all vehicular dispatches – and allow managers to undertake multiple software flashing sessions in parallel, thereby reducing the turn-around time for an operation.

GROUP OF FRIENDS

1. India, Bangladesh, Egypt, Morocco and Nepal will co-chair the 'Group of Friends' to promote accountability for crimes against peacekeepers. India will soon launch a database that will record all crimes against the Blue Helmets.
2. What is UN Peacekeeping? Peacekeeping by the United Nations is a role held by the Department of Peace Operations as an "instrument

The Union government is all set to ease grant of citizenship to members of six minority communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh whose passports and visas have ceased to be valid during their stay in India. The Home Ministry is expected to revamp the citizenship portal to accept passports and visas with expired validity as supporting documents to process citizenship application of Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Buddhists, and Jains from the three countries, says a government source.

The Delhi High Court has cleared random drug testing of aviation personnel, including pilots, crew, and air traffic controllers. Justice Prathiba M. Singh said, "After perusing CAR [Civil Aviation Requirement] and hearing parties and their counsel, it is clear that the testing of personnel for psychoactive substances is essential, considering the nature of services being rendered."

The task force, constituted in February 2014 under the leadership of former Tribal Affairs Secretary Hrusikesh Panda, had compiled a comprehensive list of over 40 communities from across the country that it felt should be included on the ST lists on a priority basis. Of those communities, nine are in Odisha, 26 are part of the tea tribes in Assam, eight are in Chhattisgarh, and a few are in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

INS Mormugao, a stealth guided missile destroyer being built under Project-15B, was commissioned into the Indian Navy at a ceremony in Mumbai. Named after the historic port city of Goa on the west coast, Mormugao, the ship was commissioned on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule.

India's net direct tax collections in 2022-23 surpassed the ₹11-lakh crore mark by December 17, reflecting a 19.81% uptick over last year's, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said on Sunday. Last year, in the corresponding period, it was ₹9,47,959 crore.

91 number of suspected measles cases in parts of Mehsana in Gujarat. The cases were identified during a surveillance carried out in the last one month, according to a health department official. One of the reasons behind the likely upsurge in suspected measles cases was attributed to the resistance to vaccination in the region.

developed by the organization as a way to help countries torn by conflict to create the conditions for lasting peace".

3. **Issues with UN Peacekeeping?** Peace operations are also being conducted in an ambiguous and complex environment Today's peacekeeper is not mandated to keep the peace but to take on robust mandates in extremely hostile conflict zones. The involvement of armed groups, terrorists and transnational organised crime has adversely impacted their operations, there have been scandals where the UN missions appear to have not done enough on corruption. UN military peacekeepers have not acted to protect civilians from violence, such as in South Sudan.
4. UN Resolution 2589 calls upon the member states to take all appropriate measures against perpetrators of violence against UN personnel India has a long history of service in UN Peacekeeping, having contributed more personnel than any other country. To date, more than 2,53,000 Indians have served in 49 of the 71 UN Peacekeeping missions established around the world since 1948.

WATER WORLDS DETECTED

1. According to a new study two alien planets, about 218 light years away from Earth have found a twin in the ocean worlds of Europa and Enceladus — moons orbiting Jupiter and Saturn. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), these exoplanets were found in the constellation Lyra.
2. **Key Findings:** The exoplanets, Kepler-138 c and Kepler-138 d, are likely water worlds — a feature that scientists have theorized for a long time. The volume of the two alien worlds was three times that of Earth and mass twice as big.
3. **The Kepler-** 138 c and d are made up of ingredients lighter than rock (rocky planets like Earth) but heavier than hydrogen or helium (gas-giant planets like Jupiter). The new planet takes 38 days to complete an orbit. It is in the habitable zone (meaning it is in an orbit that receives just the right amount of heat from its star to allow water to exist in a liquid form).

GLOBAL WATER SURVEY SATELLITE

1. NASA to conduct the first global survey of Earth's surface waters, shedding new light on the mechanics and consequences of climate change. The Surface Water and Ocean Topography satellite, or SWOT, incorporates advanced microwave radar technology to collect high-definition measurements of oceans, lakes, reservoirs and rivers over 90% of the globe.
2. The data, compiled from radar sweeps of the planet at least twice every 21 days, will be used to enhance ocean-circulation models, bolster weather and climate forecasts and aid in managing scarce freshwater supplies in drought-stricken regions.

ODD RADIO CIRCLE(ORCs)

1. New research from an Indian scientist offers plausible explanations for ORCs. Accordingly, some ORCs could have come from Supernova Explosions or Massive Black Holes. ORCs are edge-brightened, low surface brightness circular radio sources with a highly active black hole at its centre.
2. They were first discovered in 2019 using Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP). So far, astronomers have found ORCs in radio wavelengths that are most likely extragalactic. Visible light, infrared and X-ray telescopes are yet to spot them, despite their massive size.



**“Often we don't work.
We pretend.”**

DR. KHAN
(KSG)