

# NEWS TODAY

## US decides to pull out of the UN Cultural agency UNESCO

The withdrawal was announced, citing the agency's support for **woke and divisive causes and anti-Israel bias**.

- This marks **the third US exit from UNESCO** and the second under the current leadership.
- Additionally, the US also took steps to withdraw from other UN bodies and agencies, such as the WHO, and significantly reduced funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine.

### Impact of US withdrawal

- **Budgetary Impact:** The US contributes nearly 8% of UNESCO's total budget.
- **Geopolitical Impact:** The withdrawal may create space for increased influence by other powers, **particularly China**.
- **Impact on Multilateralism:** Exiting a UN body may **weaken trust in multilateral institutions** and signal a retreat from global cooperation.

### About UNESCO

- It is a **specialized agency of the United Nations**.
- **Purpose:** To contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture.
- Its **Headquarters in Paris** serves as the Organization's main building.
- It has **194 Members and 12 Associate Members**.
- **Key Reports and Initiatives:**
  - ⊕ Global Education Monitoring Report
  - ⊕ World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development
  - ⊕ UNESCO World Heritage Sites
  - ⊕ Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

## Arctic is encountering unprecedented winter warming

In February 2025, **exceptionally high air temperatures and rainfall** over Svalbard (an archipelago in the Arctic) triggered widespread snowmelt and pooling of meltwater.

- **Human-caused global warming** is particularly amplified in the Arctic, causing the climate in the Arctic to **warm more quickly than the rest of the Earth**, in a phenomenon known as **Arctic Amplification**.

### Factors for Arctic Amplification

- **Reduced Albedo:** When temperature rise, reflective layer of ice and snow cover in Arctic is gradually replaced by darker ocean water and exposed land, both of which absorb more solar energy.
  - This absorption accelerates warming, resulting in additional ice and snow loss – constituting a **feedback loop**.
- **Lapse rate feedback:** In Arctic, warming from greenhouse gases is **most pronounced near the surface** while in the Tropics, extra heat spreads vertically due to convection.
- **Water Vapour Triple Effect:** Water vapour creates more cloud cover contributing to heating, release heat during condensation into water and acts as a greenhouse gas.
- **Atmospheric Heat transport:** A larger **increase in moisture in the tropics** increases the rate of heat transport from the tropics to the Arctic.

### Impact of Arctic Amplification

- **Accelerates Global Warming:** Permafrost thawing releases CO<sub>2</sub> and Methane from stored organic carbon.
- **Ecological Change:** Winter warming and rain remove insulating snow, exposing tundra and microbes to harsher temperature differences.
- **Impacts on India:**
  - ⊕ **Disruption of Indian Monsoon:** Declining Arctic sea ice is linked to stronger monsoons leading to **extreme rainfall events**.
  - ⊕ **Sea level rise:** It threatens coastal cities, risks salinization of agricultural areas etc.
  - ⊕ **Increased Economic and Social Risks** due to Agricultural losses, health impacts, Infrastructural damages etc.

## Supreme Court gave its observations on balancing protection of stray dogs with concerns of citizens

Supreme Court observed that citizens who wished to feed stray dogs should consider doing so inside their own homes, highlighting the **ethical divide over stray dogs**.

- Supreme Court observed that **law warrant the protection of street dogs**, but the authorities will have to bear in mind the **concern of common man**, such that their movement on streets are not hampered by dog attacks.

### Ethical Issues Concerning Stray Dogs

- **Compassion vs Public Order:** Citizens have compassion towards feeding stray dogs but others argue that it encourages territorial aggression and public nuisance.
- **Animal Welfare vs Public Safety:** Stray dogs have right to life and dignity yet communities also have the right to safety from dog bites and rabies.
  - ⊕ According to NCDC, **more than 37 lakh dog bite cases** were reported in India in 2024.
- **Ecological Carrying Capacity vs Population Control:** It is argued that humans are increasing capacity for stray dog population by feeding them and on the other hand are adopting unethical animal control methods.
- **Utilitarianism vs Deontological Approach: Abandonment vs Responsibility:** Utilitarianian component in human-dog bond has weakened significantly resulting in abandonment of pets while deontological approach prioritizes fulfilling responsibilities towards stray dogs.

### Provisions regarding Stray Dogs in India

- **Constitution: Article 243(W)** mandates municipalities to control stray dog population while **Article 51A(g)** places a fundamental duty on citizens "to have **compassion for living creatures**"
- **Rules: Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023** under the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960** seek to **control stray dog populations** through sterilisation, and to curb the spread of rabies by vaccination.
  - ⊕ Rules addresses **feeding of community animals by assigning responsibility** to the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), or Local Bodies.
- **Court Judgements:** Supreme Court, in **Jallikattu Case 2014**, has interpreted the right to life and liberty (Article 21) as extending to animals as well.

## World Bank report highlights need for more investment in resilient and green Urban Infrastructure

Report, titled 'Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India', estimates that the total **investment needs** for new **resilient and green urban infrastructure** and services are **\$2.4 trillion by 2050**.

### India's Urban Landscape

- **Urban population:** In 2020, cities hosted over one-third of the national population – around 480 million people.
- **Expansion in unsafe areas:** Between 1985 and 2015, settlement extent in high flood-risk areas grew by 102%.
- **Future projections:** Urban population is likely to double to 951 million by 2050.
  - ⊕ **By 2030**, cities will account for **70 % of all new employment generated** and contributing **75% to GDP by 2050**.

### Climate risks to Indian Cities

- **Flooding:** Forecasted increase in risk of 3.6 to 7 times of pluvial flooding (surface water floods) by 2070 due to increasingly uncertain and intense rainfall associated with climate change and increase in areas of impervious surfaces.
- **Extreme Heat:** 1/5th of working hours in major Indian cities could be under high heat stress conditions by 2050.

### City Climate Action Plan for Climate Resilient Urban Development

- **Climate and disaster risk assessment:** Develop local hazard specific investment plan, integrate disaster risk information in land use plan, etc.
- **Prioritize more vulnerable including urban poor:** Develop and strengthen local programs to support informal settlements, identify high-risk residents based on climate and disaster risk mapping, etc.
- **Invest in green city expansion:** Enable compact city through transit-oriented development, promote LED and other energy efficient technologies for street lighting, forbid construction in risk-prone areas, etc.
- **Efficient, resilient and green municipal services:** City-level analysis of water sector to improve energy efficiency, invest in efficient and low-carbon Solid Waste Management (SWM), etc.
- **Others:** Climate-sensitive new urban development, facilitate the private sector's role in risk transfer and resilience, etc.

## Intellectual Property filings in India surge 44% in last 5 Years

Recently, Minister of State for Ministry of Commerce & Industry informed the Lok Sabha that **highest growth was observed in Geographical Indications (GI)** with a 380% increase, followed by Designs, Patents, Copyright, and Trademarks.

- This surge is largely driven by strategic reforms to enhance Intellectual Property (IP) activities and foster innovation and boost IP filing in India.

### Government Initiatives to foster IP activities

- **Procedural reforms:** Fixing of timelines for grant of patents, reduction of number of forms (from 74 to 8) for registration of Trademarks, etc.
- **Fee concessions:** 80% Fee Reduction in Patents for Startups, MSMEs, and Educational Institutions; 75% Fee Reduction in Designs for Startups, and MSMEs; etc.
- **Digitalization:** IP Dashboard to provide real-time comprehensive data on IP applications, AI-powered Trademark Search Technology for a more efficient and accurate examination of Trade Mark applications, etc.
- **Programmes and schemes:** National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM), IPR Internship Programme, Start-Ups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP) Scheme, National Intellectual Property (IP) Awards, etc.
- **International standards:** Adoption of International classification under Locarno Agreement for Industrial Designs.
  - ⊕ **Locarno agreement** is an international agreement under the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) signed in 1968.

## Also In News



### Article 143

The Supreme Court issued notices to the Union and State Governments on a **Presidential Reference (under Article 143)** on powers of President and Governor in dealing with state bills.

### Article 143 of the Indian Constitution

- Article 143(1) empowers the President to refer any question of law or fact of public importance to the Supreme Court for its **advisory opinion**.
  - ⊕ President makes such reference based on **advice of the Union Council of Ministers**.
- Supreme Court **may provide its opinion** on the matter but it is **not binding on the President**.



### Mhadei/Mahadayi River

Goa is considering approaching the Supreme Court on the Mhadei river water dispute against Karnataka's Kalasa-Banduri project.

- **Kalasa-Banduri Project** involves building barrages across Kalasa and Banduri (Mhadei tributaries) to divert water to Malaprabha River.

### About Mhadei river:

- It **originates** in Jamboti Ghat in Karnataka (Western Ghats) and flows into the eastern Arabian Sea.
- It flows through **Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra**.



### Financial Inclusion Index

RBI's financial inclusion index shows growth across all segments in FY25.

- It **improved to 67** from **64.2** for **FY 2024** largely due to increased usage and better quality, reflecting deepening of financial inclusion, and sustained financial literacy initiatives.

### About Financial Inclusion Index

- **Overview:** First introduced in 2021 and is published annually in July.
- **Comprehensive index:** It includes details of banking, investments, insurance, postal and pension sector.
- **Aim:** To measure the **extent of financial inclusion** in India.
- **Index Range:** 0 (complete exclusion) to 100 (full inclusion).
- **Parameters:** Access (35%), Usage (45%), and Quality (20%).
- **No Base Year:** FI-Index has been constructed without any 'base year'.



### Great Ruaha River

**Great Ruaha River** in Tanzania is drying up due to climate change and mismanagement driven by increasing human activities.

### About Great Ruaha River

- It is one of **Tanzania's major rivers** and an important **tributary of Rufiji River** (largest river basin in Tanzania).
- It is the main water source for the **Ruaha National Park**.





## Section 498A of IPC

Supreme Court ordered implementation of **Allahabad High Court's 2022 guidelines** that restrain Police from taking any action, including arrest, during a **"cooling-period" of two months in matrimonial cruelty cases.**

### About Section 498A

- **Objective:** To protect women being subjected to cruelty by the husband or his relatives.
- It provides that if a woman is treated with cruelty **by her husband or his relatives**, they can be punished with **up to three years in jail and a fine.**
- The offense is **cognizable and non-bailable.**
- **Section 85 under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** contains similar provisions.



## Biostimulant

Union Agriculture Minister urged states to halt mandatory tagging of Biostimulant with Fertilisers.

### About Biostimulant

- **Definition:** Any substance that stimulates physiological processes in plants and helps enhance the yield from a harvest.
- It is regulated under **Fertiliser (Inorganic, Organic or Mixed) (Control) Order, 1985.**
- **Biostimulants** can improve:
  - ⊕ Nutrient availability and use Efficiency
  - ⊕ Tolerance to stress
  - ⊕ Crop quality, etc.



## Winter Fog Experiment (WiFEX)

**Winter Fog Experiment (WiFEX)** completes 10 years of dedicated research into North India's dense winter fog and its impact.

### About WiFEX

- It is **one of the world's few long-term open-field experiments** focused solely on fog.
- **Institutions:** Led by **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology** under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- **Objective:** To develop better now-casting (next 6 hours) and forecasting of winter fog.



## Chola Gangam Lake

Tamil Nadu government announced to develop **Chola Gangam lake.**

### About Chola Gangam Lake

- Also called **Ponneri (Golden) Lake**, it was built by **Rajendra Chola I** in Gangaikondacholapuram.
- ⊕ **Gangaikondacholapuram was created as the capital by Rajendra Chola I.**
  - ◆ It **commemorates his victorious northern campaign** and conquest of the Gangetic plains.
- According to the **Tiruvalluvar Copper Plates**, the lake was the **liquid pillar of victory** established by the king.



## Place in News



## Vanuatu (Capital: Port Vila)

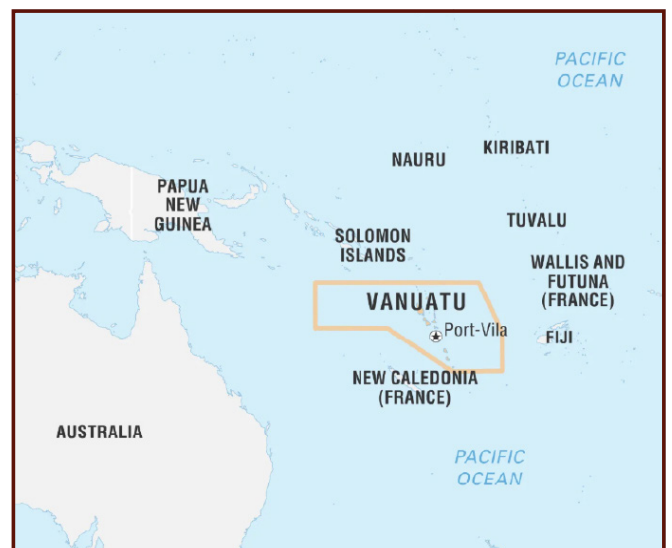
Pacific nation of Vanuatu has approached the International Court of Justice to classify environmental destruction as ecocide.

### Political Features

- **Location:** Vanuatu is an archipelago (Part of Melanesia) in South Pacific Ocean, situated east of northern Australia and west of Fiji.
- **Maritime Boundaries:** Surrounded by the South Pacific Ocean, with an extensive Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

### Geographical Features

- These islands are of **volcanic origin**, featuring mountainous terrains and coastal plains.
- **Major Islands:** Notable islands include Espiritu Santo, Malakula, and Efate.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI