

## UN chief unveils progress report on structural reforms, program realignments

The "Shifting Paradigms: United to Deliver" report, under Workstream 3 of the UN80 Initiative, proposes **structural and programmatic realignments** for a more coherent and effective United Nations.

- It calls for **fewer silos, less duplication and more effective collaboration**.
- It also aims to **ensure that all reforms are undertaken in accordance with the applicable rules and procedures**, including the Charter of the United Nations.

### Proposals for Main Areas of Focus

- Peace & Security:** Consolidating offices and leadership layers, establishing centres of excellence for peacebuilding and for Women, etc.
- Sustainable Development:** Recommends assessing mergers (UNDP and UNOPS, UNFPA and UN Women), sunsetting UNAIDS by 2026, and creating Joint Knowledge Hubs for pooled expertise.
- Human Rights:** Establishing a **system-wide Human Rights Group**, led by the High Commissioner, to integrate human rights across all UN activities.
- Humanitarian:** Launching a **New Humanitarian Compact** to cut bureaucracy.

### Paradigm Shifts to Enable Impact

- Technology & Data:** Proposes a **UN System Data Commons** and a **Technology Accelerator Platform** to modernize operations and link fragmented data.
- Funding:** Reforming pooled and core funding mechanisms to be more attractive and aligned with collective priorities.

### UN80 Initiative

- The UN80 Initiative is a system-wide push to **streamline operations, sharpen impact, and reaffirm the UN's relevance** for a rapidly changing world.
- It is divided into three workstreams:
  - The first** is focused on **improving internal efficiency and effectiveness**.
  - The second** is a mandate implementation review, which involves **examining thousands of mandate documents underpinning the UN Secretariat's work** (a mandate refers to a task or responsibility assigned to the organisation by the Member States).
  - The third** explores **whether structural changes and programme realignment are needed across the UN System**.

## World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Releases State of Global Water Resources 2024

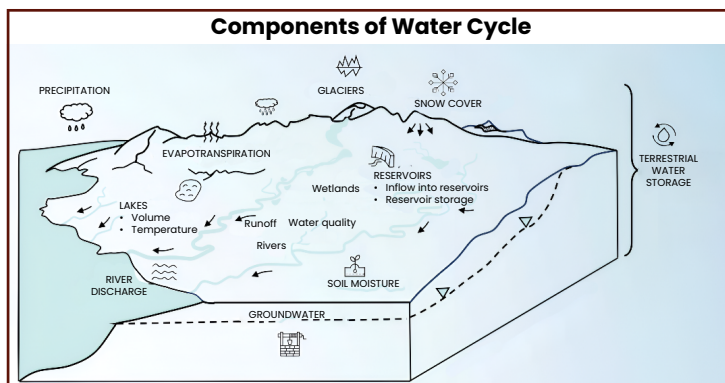
The report highlights that **water cycle has become increasingly erratic and extreme**, swinging between deluge and drought.

### Key Highlights of Report

- Glacier Melt:** All glacier regions worldwide report losses due to melt for third straight year.
  - Many small-glacier regions have already reached or are about to pass the so-called **Peak Water Point** - when a glacier's melting reaches its maximum annual runoff, after which this decreases due to glacier shrinkage.
- Erratic Water Cycle:** Two thirds of global river catchment area have **too much or too little water**.
  - This is leading to **increasing extreme events** – unusual heavy rainfall in Africa's tropical zone, extensive flooding in Europe and Asia, drought in Amazon Basin, etc.

### Water Cycle

- Water cycle describes the **continuous movement of water within the Earth and atmosphere** and involve pools and fluxes.
  - Pool** refers to many forms and places where water is stored like lake, glacier, atmosphere, etc.
  - Fluxes** are ways that water moves between the pools, including state changes like evaporation or condensation.
- Impact of Climate Change:** Warming global climate **intensifies water cycle** as it increases the role of evaporation.
  - It leads to more water being stored in atmosphere, **increasing extreme weather events** such as droughts, heavy precipitation, and hurricanes.
  - It is causing **sea level rise** through melting glaciers and expansion of ocean water, flooding coastal areas.



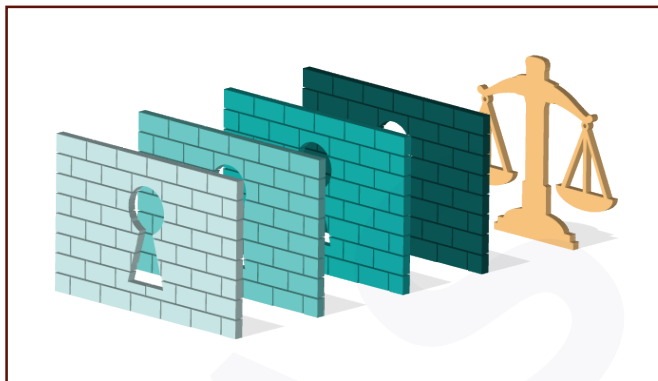
## Chief Justice addresses barriers for Marginalised and Vulnerable Citizens in Accessing Justice

**Access to justice** is the ability of a State where **every person can get judicial redress in a fair, equal and speedy manner.**

- **Article 14, Article 21 and Article 39A** of the constitution guarantee the citizens the right to access to justice.

### Barriers to Access to Justice

- **Geographical:** Courts and law schools physically far from rural/ remote areas.
- **Linguistic:** Legal education and proceedings dominated by English.
- **Economic:** High cost of legal education and litigation expenses.
- **Social:** Caste system, Illiteracy, lack of legal awareness.
- **Others:** Digital Divide, Lack of Physical Infrastructure. E.g. Over 4.6 crore cases pending in lower courts.



### Institutional Initiatives for Access to Justice

- **National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms:** To increase access to justice and enhance accountability through structural changes.
- **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987:** National Legal Services Authority, State Legal Services Authority, Lok Adalats.
- **E-Courts Mission Mode Project:** Digitization of Courts.

### Way Forward

- **Linguistic Inclusivity:** Promote instruction and proceedings in regional languages.
- **Legal Education Reform:** Provide financial Support through Scholarships, stipends, and fee waivers.
- **Regional & Local Access:** Establish more courts, law schools, and legal aid clinics.
- **Technology Integration:** Use technology to deliver justice.

## The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (PWDV) Act, 2005, completed 20 years

The PWDV Act is aimed at providing protection to **wife or female live-in partner from violence** at the hands of the husband or male live-in partner or his relatives.

- According to the "**Crime in India 2022**" report by the **NCRB**, around 4.45 lakh cases of crimes against women were registered in 2022 with majority crimes as Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives.

### Key Aspects of the Act Include

- **Definition of Domestic Violence:** Includes actual abuse or threat of abuse, whether physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or economic and harassment by way of unlawful dowry demands.
- **Institutional Mechanism:** Requires State Government to appoint Protection Officers, register Service Providers, and notify shelter homes and medical facilities.
  - ⊕ **Protection Officers** make domestic incident report to Magistrate, ensures legal aid to aggrieved woman, and make available a safe shelter home.
  - ⊕ **Service Provider** provides legal aid, medical, financial or other assistance to the aggrieved woman.
- **Reliefs:** Aggrieved woman can seek various reliefs such as protection order, residence order, custody order, monetary reliefs, shelter and medical facilities.
- **Residence Rights:** Act provides every woman in a domestic relationship the right to reside in the shared household.

### Concerns Related to PWDVA, 2005

- **Social and cultural obstacles** such as victim-blaming and economic dependence on abusers play a significant role.
- **Structural problems** like poor shelter infrastructure and low conviction rates further hinder effective protection.
- **Institutional barriers** like lack of awareness among women and inadequate training of Protection officers and Police.
- **Misuse:** There has been increase in a number of false cases being filed under the act.

## Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement

The agreement aims to develop aspects of defence cooperation between the two countries and strengthen **joint deterrence against any aggression**.

- It states that **"any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both"**.

### Impacts of the Agreement

- Regional Security:** For Saudi Arabia, it strengthens defences against threats from Iran, Yemen's Houthi militias and Israel.
- Nuclear Warfare:** It further raises the **fears of nuclear warfare**, as Pakistan extends its nuclear umbrella to Saudi Arabia, in the already tense region of West Asia.
- Shifting Power Dynamics:** It signifies a **move away from traditional role of US as security guarantor** in the region due to US ally Israel's war on Gaza and its strikes on regional neighbours.
  - This could create a **strategic vacuum** for China to deepen its clout in the region.
- Implications for India:** Pakistan may see the pact as strategic deterrence against India in **future military confrontation**, especially in response to cross border terrorism.

### India-Saudi Arabia Relations

- Strategic partnership** was formalised in 2010 via **Riyadh declaration**.
- Economic:** India is the **second largest trade partner of Saudi Arabia**, whereas Saudi Arabia is the fifth largest trading partner of India.
  - Bilateral trade** in 2023 was 42.98 billion and **India** remained a **net importer**.
  - In 2024, Saudi Arabia contributed **6.7% of India's total inward remittances**.
- Energy Partnership:** Saudi Arabia is third largest crude oil supplier to India.

## Also In News



### Chabahar port

The **US administration** said that it is **withdrawing the sanctions waiver** granted to Chabahar port in Iran, which is **being developed by India**.

- US had exempted the Chabahar port project from sanctions on Iran in 2018.

### About Chabahar Port

- Deep water port located on the **Gulf of Oman**, in Sistan-Baluchistan Province of Iran.
- It is **closest Iranian port to India** and it grants India **access to landlocked Afghanistan** and other Central Asian countries bypassing Pakistan.
- In, 2024, India signed a contract granting state-run **India Ports Global Ltd. (IPGL)** the **right to equip and operate the port for 10 years**.
- Additionally, it is part of proposed **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** connecting India to Europe, Russia, Central Asia etc.



### India-AI Impact Summit 2026

Recently, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, unveiled the **key flagship initiatives for the India-AI Impact Summit 2026**, being hosted for the first time by a global south nation.

- It will be guided by **3 sutras – People, Planet and Progress** and discussions will be centered around **7 thematic Chakras** - Human Capital, Inclusion, Safe & Trusted AI, Resilience, Science, Democratizing AI Resources, and Social Good.

### Flagship Initiatives:

- AI Pitch Fest (UDAAN)** to showcase innovative AI startups.
- Global innovation challenges for youth, women, and other participants** to foster AI-driven innovations.
- Research symposium** to forge international AI collaborations.







## Reinforcement Learning

DeepSeek-R1 shows that reasoning in Large Language Models can be incentivized through reinforcement learning.

### About Reinforcement Learning (RL)

- It is a machine learning process that **focuses on decision making by autonomous agents** (any system that can make decisions and act in response to its environment like robots and self-driving cars).
- It operates on a **trial-and-error basis** in the absence of any guidance from a human user.
  - The agent takes an action, receives a reward or penalty, and uses this feedback to adjust its future actions to maximize its cumulative reward.
- Key Components:** It involves an **Agent** (the learner), the **Environment** (the context it operates in), and a **Reward Signal** (the feedback).



## Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)

Led by Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) in collaboration with Cochin Shipyard Ltd. (CSL), Project Swayat aims to develop the country's first indigenous autonomous vessel (MASS).

### About MASS

- MASS is Ship which, to a varying degree, **can operate independently of human interaction**.
- IMO categorises MASS into **four degrees of autonomy**:
  - Ship with automated processes and decision support (Degree one);
  - Remotely controlled ships with seafarers on board (Degree two);
  - Remotely controlled ships without seafarers on board (Degree three);
  - Fully autonomous ship (Degree four);



## Manganese

MOIL starts export of Manganese ore as State Trading Enterprise (STE).

- The Government of India has appointed **MOIL as a STE for export of Manganese ore below 46% Mn grade from India**.
- Manganese occurs as **silvery grey in colour and is very hard and brittle in nature**.
  - Odisha tops the total reserves/resources** followed by Karnataka.
  - Madhya Pradesh is the leading producing State** of manganese ore (2021-22).
- India's surplus low-grade manganese ore exports hold major significance as **India has surplus Mn ore of low grade fines**.



## Advance Authorisation scheme (AAS)

Recently, Indian Metallurgical Coke Manufacturers Association (IMCOM) flagged the misuse of AAS.

- It alleged that the imported coking coal was being used for steel sold in the domestic market instead of exports.

### About AAS

- Allows **duty-free import** of inputs that are **physically incorporated** in export products (including exports to SEZs) making exports competitive.
  - In addition, fuel, oil, and catalyst which are consumed in the process of production, may also be allowed.
- Administered By: Directorate General of Foreign Trade** under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



## Maternal Mortality

Puducherry becomes the first UT to achieve zero maternal mortality.

- Maternal mortality means** death of a woman while pregnant or **within 42 days of termination of pregnancy**, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management **but not from accidental or incidental causes**.
- Key indicators of maternal mortality is the **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)**.
- SDG target:** MMR of 70 per 100,000 live births. (**India: 93** per 100,000 births)
  - Kerala, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Gujarat, and Karnataka have already achieved SDG target.



## Blue Ports

India signed a **Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)** agreement with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to strengthen Blue Port infrastructure in India.

- The partnership includes developing three pilot **Smart and Integrated Fishing Harbours** namely Vanakbara in Diu, Karaikal in Puducherry and Jakhau in Gujarat.

### About the FAO Blue Ports Initiative

- The Blue Ports Initiative promotes the transformation of marine and coastal areas into **social, economic and environmentally sustainable zones**, involving all relevant stakeholders.
  - It aims to help fishing ports become strategic platforms for local, national, and regional growth.

## Place in News



## United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Capital: Abu Dhabi)

India-UAE High Level Joint Task Force on Investments meeting took place.

### Political Features

- The UAE is a **federation of seven emirates** including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah.
- Bordering Countries:** Saudi Arabia (west and south), Oman (southeast).
- Maritime Boundary:** Gulf of Oman (east), Persian Gulf (north and northwest).

### Geographical Features

- It is located in the **Eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula**.
- Strategic location along the **Strait of Hormuz**, a transit point for crude oil.
- Climate:** Desert (hot and humid in summer, warm and sunny in winter); cooler in eastern mountains.
- Tropic of Cancer passes through UAE** (Abu Dhabi emirate).



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI