

UNESCO launches new initiatives for greening education in classrooms

UNESCO launched two new tools – new Greening Curriculum Guidance (GCG) and new Green School Quality Standards (GSQS) – under **Greening Education Partnership**.

- **New GCG:** A practical manual providing, for the first time, a **common understanding of what climate education should consist of** and how countries can mainstream environmental topics across curricula, with detailed expected learning outcomes.
- **New GSQS:** It sets the **minimum requirements on how to create a green school** by promoting an action-oriented approach.

About Greening Education Partnership:

- It is a **global initiative** comprising 80 member states and supports countries to tackle the **climate crisis by harnessing the critical role of education**.
- **Objective:** To ensure all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and action to **tackle climate change and to promote sustainable development**.
- **Pillars of Green Education:**
 - ⊕ **Greening Schools:** To ensure that all schools achieve green school accreditation and address climate change through their teaching, facilities and operations.
 - ⊕ **Greening Curriculum:** Integrate climate education into school curricula, technical and vocational education and training, workplace skills development etc.
 - ⊕ **Greening Teacher Training and Education Systems' Capacities:** Integration of climate education in building school capacities.
 - ⊕ **Greening Communities:** Strengthen community resilience through community learning centres and learning cities.

Greening Education in National Education Policy 2020



Education and Climate Change

- **50% of 100 countries** in recent UNESCO survey have **no mention of climate change in their curriculum**.
- **Around 70%** of young people **could not explain climate disruption**.
- **A higher level of education** tends to be associated with a **higher probability to engage in adaptation action**.
- Increasing girls' education can mitigate climate change indirectly through its **impact on demographic growth**.

RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) keeps the Repo rate unchanged

Decision about Repo rate was announced in **bi-monthly meeting of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) MPC**.

- Repo rate is the rate at which the **central bank lends money to commercial banks** against the **collateral of government and other approved securities**.

Additional Steps on Developmental and Regulatory Policies announced by RBI

- **Rationalisation of Export and Import regulations** under Foreign Exchange Management Act (1999), to promote ease of doing business for all the stakeholders.
- Proposed to set up **Digital Payments Intelligence Platform (DPIP)** to utilize advanced tech to curb payment fraud.
 - ⊕ RBI constituted a committee led by **A.P. Hota** to examine various aspects of setting up a **digital public infrastructure for DPIP**.
- Proposed to bring **UPI Lite into the e-mandate framework** by enabling an auto-replenishment feature for the UPI Lite wallet.
- Proposed to revise **definition of the bulk deposit as Single Rupee term deposits of ₹3 crore and above** for Scheduled Commercial Banks (excluding Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)) and Small Finance Banks.
 - ⊕ For Local Area Banks **₹1 crore and above** as applicable in case of RRBs.

About Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

- Under the amended **RBI Act, 1934** the **central government** is empowered to constitute a **six-member MPC**.
 - ⊕ Three-members from the RBI and three members appointed by the **government**.
- It determines the **policy repo rate required to achieve the inflation target**.
- Each member of the MPC has one vote, and in the event of an equality of votes, the **Governor has a second or casting vote**.

GTRI released Building Better: India's Path to Superior Quality Infrastructure Report

The report highlights the key issues and provides insights into how India can enhance its Quality infrastructure.

➤ **India's quality infrastructure** includes:

- ⊕ **Standardization**, Quality Control Orders (QCOs) and Compulsory Registration Orders (CROs) led by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS),
 - ◆ Implemented by BIS, QCOs are **mandatory regulatory standards** used to ensure that products meet specific quality, safety, and performance standards.
 - ◆ CROs are essentially **QCOs with additional requirement for pre-registration** of a firm with a government agency.
- ⊕ **Conformity assessment**: Through third party inspections, and
- ⊕ **Certifications and Accreditation**: Coordinated by Quality Council of India.

Key highlights of Report

- India has **fast tracked issuance of QCOs and CROs** but it **needs to augment each leg** of quality infrastructure.
- Since implementation of **BIS Act 2016, which simplified the process** of notifying specific standards for products, **over 140 QCOs have been issued** for more than 550 products.
- Rapid pace of QCOs created **implementation challenges** for firms, importers and government agencies.

Recommendations for improving Quality Infrastructure

- India should seek **international accreditation for BIS certifications**.
- Regulations should **balance enforcement with industry capacity**.
- Support for SMEs should include **gradual implementation** of QCOs and CROs, financial assistance, and technical guidance.
- **Regulatory impact assessments** should be conducted.

Impact of QCOs

- Significant reduction in import of **substandard products**.
- Noticeable decrease in consumer complaints and product recalls related to **safety issues**.
- Increase in domestic electronics production and **R&D spending in related sectors**.
- **Facilitated international trade**.

Boeing Starliner Successfully Docks NASA Crew at International Space Station

Starliner has innovative, weldless, reusable structure **lasting up to 10 missions with six-month turnarounds**, featuring wireless internet interfaces.

About International Space station (ISS)

- It is an **artificial satellite research facility** jointly developed by the USA, European Countries, Japan, Canada and Russia.
- It is the **largest manmade and habitable** artificial satellite.
- **Altitude**: Installed in the near-earth orbit which is about **400 km above the earth**.

Benefits of ISS

- **Research on Earth**: The ISS collects data and images aiding climate research, disaster monitoring and response, and studies on light pollution.
- **New Frontier in Physics**: The ISS's microgravity environment offers new insights into physics, enabling research on colloids, bubbles, and fluid behaviour.
- **Advancing Human Health**: Scientists study disease, test drugs, and examine human biology using microgravity tools like protein crystals and tissue chips.
- **Low Earth Orbit Economy**: It is a platform for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and researchers to test their technology in space.
- **Long-Duration Space Travel**: Research aids understanding space travel's impact on humans and feasibility of human habitats on Mars.

About India's Own Space Station:

- **Conceptualisation Phase**: ISRO is developing India's first space station, **Bharatiya Antariksh Station**.
- The station is planned to be **assembled in a phased manner** like ISS by 2035.
- The **Gaganyaan mission**, expected to launch by 2026, will demonstrate India's capability to **send humans into space**

Full report of Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2022-23 released

It is released by the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)**. A factsheet along with key highlights from the survey was released in February.

- HCES is designed to collect information on consumption of goods and services by households.

Key findings of the survey

- **Fall in the Gini coefficient**, for both rural and urban spending between 2011-12 and 2022-23.
 - ⊖ The Gini coefficient is used to measure inequality, where zero represents **perfect equality** and one represents **perfect inequality**.
- The average estimated **Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE)** in 2022-23 is observed to be Rs. 3,773 in rural India and Rs. 6,459 in urban India.
- Share of expenditure on **food in rural India was 46%** and in **urban India was 39%**.

Utilisation of HCES

- For understanding the **consumption pattern, standard of living and well-being of the households**.
- Play a key role in reviewing **critical economic indicators**, including GDP, poverty levels, and Consumer Price Inflation.
- Indicators from the survey are essential for **planning, policy-making and further statistical analysis** by government organisations, academics, researchers and scholars.

About National Sample Survey Office

- **Headed by the Director General**, it has been responsible for **conducting large scale sample surveys in diverse fields** on an All India basis since 1950.
- Primarily data are collected through nation-wide household surveys on various **socio-economic subjects, Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), etc.**
- Under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.

16th meeting of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) concluded

Inclusive framework on BEPS is nearing **completion of negotiations on Pillar One** while Global Minimum Tax agreed under **Pillar Two is in the process of coming into force** in countries worldwide.

About BEPS

- BEPS refers to **tax planning strategies** used by Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) that exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to **avoid paying tax**.
 - ⊖ This is done by artificially **shifting profits to low or no-tax locations** where there is little or no economic activity or by eroding tax bases through **deductible payments** such as interest or royalties.
- **Developing countries' higher reliance on Corporate Income Tax (CIT)** means they suffer from BEPS disproportionately.
 - ⊖ BEPS practices cost countries **USD 100-240 billion in lost revenue** annually, equivalent to 4-10% of global CIT revenue.

OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS

- It is a global initiative that brings together **147 countries and jurisdictions (including India) to fight tax avoidance and ensure fair tax practices**.
- Established in **2016**, it later adopted **Two-pillar approach**:
 - ⊖ **Pillar One**: Reallocation of part of largest and most profitable MNEs to countries where their consumers are present.
 - ⊖ **Pillar Two**: Global Minimum Corporate Tax (GMCT) of 15% for MNEs.

Significance of Inclusive Framework

- Ensures **fairness in tax systems** and tackle tax avoidance.
- **Strengthens international tax framework** against evolving business models and digitalization of economy.
- GMCT is expected to raise up to **USD 192 billion annually** for both developed and developing countries.

Also in News



Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)

IBBI issues new guidelines to streamline the process of appointing Insolvency Professionals (IPs) as resolution professionals.

About IBBI

- **Statutory body** under the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016**
- **Headquarters**: New Delhi
- **Ministry**: Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- **Functions**
 - ⊖ It has **regulatory oversight over the service providers** in the insolvency ecosystem.
 - ⊖ It has responsibility to **provide a regulatory framework for insolvency and resolution** processes of corporates and individuals.
- Functioning of the IBBI are governed by a **Governing Board constituted by the Central Government**



Common Service Centres (CSCs)

An MoU was signed between CSC Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) and Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare to convert 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) into CSCs.

- FPO is a type of **Producer Organisation (legal entity formed by primary producers)** where the members are farmers.

About CSC

- CSCs provide citizen access to **Government-to-Citizen e-services** by creating physical service delivery ICT (Information and Communication Technology) infrastructure.
- Initially part of **National e-Governance Plan**, CSC 2.0 is being implemented under Digital India Mission.
 - ⊖ Presently, there are **5.43 lakh functional CSCs**.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.



Liquid Nitrogen

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued **advisory on unauthorized use of liquid nitrogen** in food by food serving establishments.

About Liquid Nitrogen

- Nitrogen is **colourless, odourless gas or liquid** (cooled to liquid at very low temperature).
- It has **functional use** as 'freezing agent, propellant, packaging gas & foaming agent'.
- As per **Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulation, 2011**, nitrogen is a Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) additive.
 - ⊕ It is allowed in dairy-based ice cream desserts at GMP levels solely for **contact-freezing and cooling purposes**.
- **Health Effects:** Frostbite, burns, asphyxiation and damage to internal organs.



White Phosphorous

Israel is accused of using white phosphorus munitions in southern Lebanon.

White Phosphorous

- It is a **toxic substance** produced from **phosphate-containing rocks**.
- Reacts and burns in **air at temperatures above 30 °C** until deprived of oxygen
- **Uses:**
 - ⊕ **Military:** In ammunition, to produce smoke for concealing troop movements and identifying targets.
 - ⊕ **Industrial:** To manufacture chemicals used in fertilizers, food additives, and cleaning compounds.
- It is not considered a chemical weapon under the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**.



Avian influenza A(H5N2)

First human infection with **avian influenza A(H5N2) virus** found in Mexico.

- **Depending on the original host**, influenza A viruses can be classified as avian influenza, swine influenza, or other types of animal influenza viruses.
- **Avian influenza or Bird flu** is a viral infection that primarily affects birds.
 - ⊕ Certain subtypes of the **virus can infect humans**, leading to severe respiratory illnesses like H5N1.
 - ⊕ **Symptoms:** Fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, and severe respiratory distress in advanced cases.



Heat Dome

Cities across southern and western states in the USA are facing heat waves due to a weather phenomenon known as Heat Dome.

About Heat Dome

- It is a weather phenomenon where a **ridge of high pressure gets stuck in the atmosphere**.
- It traps hot air that expands vertically into the atmosphere and high pressure pushes it toward the ground.
- Winds usually move from high pressure but with the dome stretching far into the atmosphere, these **weather systems become almost stationary**.



Orchids

New research has revealed that **Orchid plants nurture their seedlings via an underground fungal network**.

Orchids

- They can be **terrestrial, epiphytes** (grow on trees), **lithophytes** (grow on rocks), **saprophytes** (grow on decaying matter) or **semi-aquatic**.
- Orchids are grown by **seeds, tissue culture and vegetative propagation**.
- **India is home to about 1256 orchid species**, of which only **11 are protected under Wildlife Protection Act 1972**.
 - ⊕ **Arunachal Pradesh** is considered as "**Orchid Paradise of India**" as it harbors 40% of country's orchid species.
 - ⊕ **Five major flowering regions** in India include North Eastern Himalayas, Peninsular region, Western Himalayas, Western Ghats and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



Antlions

Researchers have found **two antlion species for first time** in India, Thailand and Vietnam.

- They are **Pseudoformicaleo nubecula** and **Creoleon cinnamomeus** and were found in Kerala.

About Antlion:

- Belong to **family of insects**.
- **Comparison with damselflies:** Although both have morphological resemblance, antlions are distinguished by their **long, distinct antennae**.
- **Behaviour:** Known by their **pit-building habit** as part of their predation strategy.
- **Ecological Significance:** Being **carnivorous**, they serve as **biological agents to destroy the harmful pests**.

Personality in news



Rana Punja Bhil

- Rana Punja Bhil was a **tribal leader belonging to the Bhil tribe**.
- He was a **contemporary of Maharana Pratap**, the 16th-century ruler of Mewar.

Key Contributions:

- He led the **guerilla warfare** and restricted Mughal advances in **Battle of Haldighati (1576)** between Maharana Pratap and Mughal emperor Akbar.
 - ⊕ Maharana Pratap bestowed him with the **title of "Rana."**

Values: Courage, Leadership, etc.

