

NEWS TODAY

WHO 5-year milestone report on global trans fat elimination 2023

WHO has published a new milestone report which summarizes progress over past 5 years towards global elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids (TFA), highlighting impacts on public health.

About TFA

- These are **unsaturated fatty acids** that come from **either industrial or natural sources**.
- **Industrial trans-fats** are made by **adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils** to make them more solid, and **to increase shelf-life of foods**.
- It can also be found naturally in **meat and dairy foods** from ruminant animals (e.g. cows, sheep, goats).
- **WHO's recommendation for adults** is to limit consumption of trans fat to **less than 1% of total energy intake**.

Key Highlights of the report

- **By late 2023, WHO's best-practice policies** for trans-fat elimination were **implemented in 53 nations**, covering around 46% of the global population.
- In India, **~4.63% of Coronary Heart Disease deaths** are attributable to TFA intake.

Key Recommendations

- **Sub-regional bodies must pass mandatory TFA elimination policies that are directly binding on member states as they can facilitate trade and policy implementation.**
- Beyond compliance with national policies, **food manufacturers should voluntarily eliminate industrially produced TFA** across their product portfolios.

Initiatives for Elimination of TFA

Global

- **WHO's REPLACE action package:** Provides a strategic approach to eliminate industrially-produced TFA from national food supplies.
- **WHO Validation Programme for Trans Fat Elimination:** To drive policy progress and recognize country achievement in elimination of TFA.

National

- **Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Second Amendment Regulations, 2021:** Limited industrial TFA to not more than 3% in all fats and oils by January 2021 and not more than 2% by January 2022.
- **'Trans-Fat Free' Logo:** Launched by FSSAI as part of Eat Right India Movement.

Impact of Political Representation on Forest Conservation: A study finds insights from the PESA Act

Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA), 1996 extended the provisions of part IX of the Constitution relating to **Panchayats to Scheduled Areas** under Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.

- **Scheduled area under fifth schedule** are compact, economically backward areas with preponderance of tribal population and a viable administrative entity.

About PESA

- PESA directs **establishment of Gram Sabha** to manage and protect natural resources, have rights over minor forest produce, and powers to restore land to tribals.
- PESA also introduced an **electoral quota** that requires all **chairperson positions**, as well as **at least half the seats** on each local government councils to be **reserved for Scheduled Tribes (STs)**.

Findings of study

- **Boosting ST representation** through PESA led to **average increase of tree canopy by 3% per year** and reduced deforestation.
- Other legislations, which does not ensure political representation for STs such as 73rd amendment in non-scheduled areas and Forest Rights Act 2006, had **no positive conservation effects**.
- **Forest stewardship:** STs have **economic incentive to protect forests**, as their livelihoods are based on non-timber forest produce, thus improving overall health of forests.
- **Opposition to mining:** ST representation led to **increased incidences of opposition against mining projects**.

Recommendations for improving forest conservation

- **Mandated political representation for marginalized populations** is a potential institutional mechanism that can yield improvements in conservation efforts.
- **Vesting power in umbrella institutions** such as inclusive multi-purpose village councils, rather than targeted community resource management institutions, can **better address the dual policy challenges of forest management and development**.

Packaged water maker Bisleri proposes water credits akin to carbon credits

Bisleri has partnered with **TERI School of Advanced Studies** to conduct a study and will share its findings with central government to **develop a framework for water credits** for beverages industry.

Water Credit

- A **market-based mechanism** similar to carbon credits, which incentivises water conservation and quality improvement.
 - ⊕ **Carbon credits** are generated by projects that have **reduced or avoided or removed carbon emissions**.
 - ⊕ **Each credit represents one less tonne of carbon dioxide**, or another greenhouse gas equivalent, (CO₂e) in atmosphere.
- Individuals and entities can earn **tradable credits** by adopting water-saving measures.
 - ⊕ These credits can then be **sold to others needing to offset their water usage or improve their water management practices**.

Significance of Water Credits

- **Addressing water stress** and help in achieving **SDG6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**.
 - ⊕ In India, 11 out of 15 major river basins will be **water-stressed** by 2025.
- **Enhance water use efficiency** in agriculture, which is the **largest extractor of groundwater**.
- **Promote and foster investment** in sustainable water management practices.

Challenges in implementing water credit system

- Unlike carbon emissions, water savings **require localized approach**, factoring in rainfall and consumption at a watershed level.
- **Spatial limitation for transactions** as they are confined to **hydrological boundaries**.
- **Preventing** wealthier entities from dominating the market.

Potential approach towards water credit system

- A **regulatory body** must be in place to facilitate and successfully maintain free market conditions.
- Adopt **multiplayer approach**. For example, industries can buy water credits from water-rich municipalities, thus helping them mitigate fund crunch.
- Adopt **global best practices** to lay a roadmap for water trading.
 - ⊕ For instance, water is traded on markets in **Murray-Darling basin in Australia**, which helped farmers make more productive use of water.

Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) based Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) System in India

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) plans to implement GNSS based ETC system **within the existing FASTag ecosystem**, **initially** using a **hybrid model** where both will operate simultaneously.

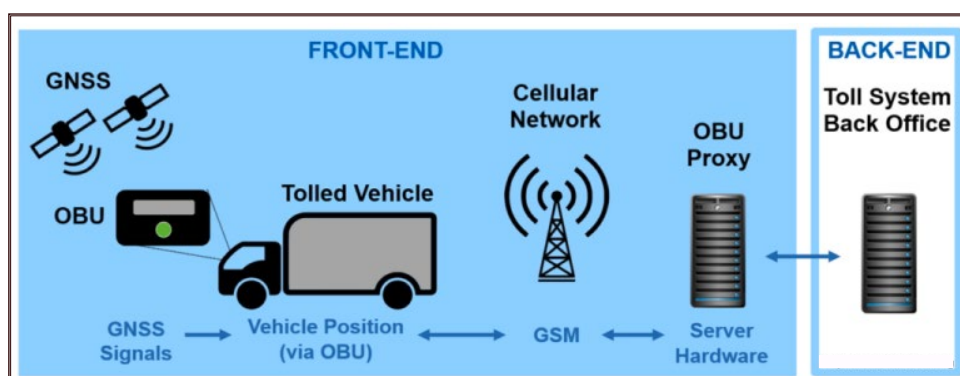
- Present system of **FASTag** is a **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)** based ETC and is part of National Electronic Toll Collection Program.

About GNSS based ETC

- It is a **barrier free method** of ETC which **uses satellites or constellations of satellites** to track vehicle's movement and calculate tolls based on the distance travelled.
- **Working**
 - ⊕ **Toll plaza** will act as Stationary Enforcement Gantry identifying GNSS vehicles.
 - ⊕ A **Centralized Toll Charger** will be responsible for distance & toll calculation of GNSS vehicles travelling on GNSS stretch.
 - ⊕ Toll Charger will receive **distance and time stamps** of GNSS vehicles through **On-board Unit (OBU)** fitted on GNSS vehicles.
 - ⊕ OBUs will be onboarded with Toll Charger through **issuer entities** similar to issuer banks under FASTag system.
 - ⊕ **Payment mechanism** will be similar to FASTag system.

Significance of GNSS based ETC

- Barrier less **free-flow tolling** and distance-based tolling, thus reducing congestion.
- Help to **plug leakages** and check toll evaders.
- **Modernization in toll collection systems** in lines with global practices.



Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Rules, 2024 notified

Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions has notified the rules under the **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024** which came into force from June 21, 2024.

Key Highlights of the Rules

- Provides for **venue-in-charge to take appropriate action, including filing of FIR**, if prima-facie case of unfair means or offense in conduct of public examination is reported.
- Provides for a **committee to be constituted** by public examination authority if there is involvement of **Management or Board of Directors of service provider**.
 - ⊕ **Service provider** is any agency, organization, body, association of persons, business entity, etc., which is engaged by the public examination authority for conduct of public examination.
- **Periodic reporting of all incidents of unfair means** or offence in conduct of public examination to public examination authority by Regional officer **along with details of action taken**.

Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

- "**Unfair means**" includes unauthorized access or leakage of question paper or answer key, assisting a candidate during a public examination, tampering with computer network or resources, conducting fake examination, etc.
- **Punishments**
 - ⊕ **For person(s) resorting to unfair means:** Imprisonment for a term not less than three years but which may extend to five years and with fine up to ten lakh rupees.
 - ⊕ **For service provider or any person/ group committing organized crime:** Imposition of a fine up to ₹1 crore and **proportionate cost of examination shall also be recovered** from it
 - ⊕ All offenses shall be **cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable**.

CDRI Policy Brief on Developing Power Sector Resilience

Policy Brief by Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) aims to **explore disaster resilience strategies for power sector against cyclones and floods**, focusing on the measures undertaken by Odisha.

- **Disaster resilience** is about anticipating, planning, and reducing disaster risk to effectively protect persons, communities and countries, their livelihoods, health, cultural heritage, socio-economic assets, and ecosystems.

Key findings for Odisha's Transmission and Distribution (T&D) infrastructure

- **80% of electricity poles are vulnerable to high wind speeds.**
- **Over 75% of distribution lines cannot withstand cyclonic winds.**
- Situation is likely to be **similar in other coastal states**.

Key Policy Recommendations

- **Enhance Codes and Standards for Wind Zonation:** Regularly update wind zonation maps to reflect most recent and localized meteorological data.
- **Create Data Access Platforms for Physical Climate Risks:** To facilitate clear communication and collaboration with disaster management authorities.
- **Risk-informed Governance:** Incorporate **resilience component** in policy, training and capacity building initiatives and develop cross-sectoral framework for enhanced stakeholder collaboration.
- **Innovative Financing Solutions:** Insurance, reinsurance, Catastrophe (CAT) bonds, creation of "Grant" component for Power Utilities to address emergent needs, etc.

About CDRI

- **Launched:** At UN Climate Action Summit (2019) by India.
- **Objective:** To promote the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks.
- **It is a global partnership of nations, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, and the private sector.**
- **Members:** 39 countries and 7 organizations.

Also in News



ULLAS - New India Literacy Programme (NILP)

Ladakh has achieved full functional literacy under the **ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram or New India Literacy Programme (NILP)**.

- **Functional literacy means** the ability to use literacy skills for personal and community's functioning and development.

ULLAS-NILP

- Launched by **Ministry of Education** to cover all aspects of Education for All.
- **Type:** Centrally sponsored scheme
- **Tenure:** From FY2022-23 to 2026-27.
- **Beneficiaries:** Cover non-literates of age group of **15 years and above**.
- **Consists of five components:** Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Critical Life Skills, Basic Education, Vocational Skills, and Continuing Education.
- Implemented through **volunteerism through online mode**.



Biomass briquettes

Biomass briquettes emerge as a **fuel alternative for the power and electricity generation sector**.

- Presently, biomass pellets are commonly used as a coal alternative

About Biomass briquettes:

- **Composition:** Compact blocks of organic materials like agricultural residues, forestry wastes, or waste biomass.
- **Briquetting Process:** Densification of biomass to improve its characteristics as a renewable energy resource.
- **Significance:**
 - ⊕ **Carbon-Neutral:** Unlike fossil fuels, they releases no additional CO₂ when burned.
 - ⊕ Help **mitigate greenhouse gas emissions**.
 - ⊕ **Supply Chain Resilience:** Uses locally available feedstock, reducing exposure to price volatility and geopolitical uncertainties.



Exercise HOPEX

Exercise HOPEX is a joint military exercise between **Indian Air Force (IAF) and Egyptian Air Force**.

- **Aim** - to promote bilateral and regional cooperation.
- IAF's Rafale fighter jets, C-17 Globemaster and IL-78 tankers are participating in the exercise.
- **Location** – Egypt.



International Criminal Court

International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Russia's Chief of Army chief and former defence minister on allegations of war crimes.

About ICC

- It is **world's first permanent and treaty based organization** to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.
- It tries individuals over four main areas - **genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crime of aggression**.
- **Founding Treaty: Rome Statute**.
- **Headquarters: The Hague, Netherlands**.
- **Members:** 124 countries are States Parties. (India is not a member).
- It is an independent international organization, and is **not part of UN system**.



Leader of Opposition

Recently constituted 18th Lok Sabha will have a Leader of Opposition (LoP), which remained vacant for the past 10 years.

About LoP

- Leader of the largest opposition party with **not less than one-tenth seats of the total strength of the Lok Sabha** is recognised as the LoP.
- Office of LoP is **not mentioned in the Constitution**.
- LoP in both the Houses of the Parliament were accorded **Statutory recognition under Salaries and Allowances of Leader of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977** and are entitled to the salary, allowances and other facilities **equivalent to that of a cabinet minister**.



India's External Debt

RBI has released the data for **India's External Debt** as at the end of **March 2024**.

Key Highlights (At end-March 2024 compared to end-March 2023)

- India's external debt was placed at **US\$ 663.8 billion**, an increase of **US\$ 39.7 billion** over last year.
- India's **external debt to GDP ratio declined to 18.7%** from 19%.
- Share of **long-term debt increased** while that of **short-term debt declined**.
- **US Dollar denominated debt** at 53.8% share **remained the largest component** of India's external debt followed by Indian rupee, yen, SDR, and euro – denominated debt.



Harmful Chemicals in Food Packaging in Plastics

Some experts have raised concerns about heating food at high temperatures and then packing it in plastic containers which can cause harmful chemicals such as **Bisphenol A, Phthalates, and Styrene** to leach into food.

- **Bisphenol A (BPA):** It is used in combination with other chemicals to manufacture certain plastics and resins.
 - ⊕ Long-term exposure to BPA has been linked to increased risks of **breast and prostate cancer, etc.**
- **Phthalates:** It is used to make plastics more flexible and durable.
 - ⊕ It can **interfere with endocrine system** and **disturb hormone regulation** in the body.
- **Styrene:** It is a colourless, flammable liquid, which has sweet odour and is highly volatile.
 - ⊕ It is a suspected **carcinogen**, can cause nervous system issues like headaches and dizziness upon exposure.



Chang'e-6

Chang'e-6 probe from China has successfully brought back the **first samples ever collected from the Moon's far side**.

- **Reaching the Moon's far side is challenging** due to its remoteness and rugged landscape, featuring massive craters and limited flat areas.

About Chang'e-6

- China's **sixth mission to the Moon**, and its **second to the far side**.
 - ⊕ In 2019, China became **first country to land a probe (Yutu-2) on far side** of the moon.
- Retrieved samples will help test theories about the formation of moon and understand the composition of centre of the Moon, etc.

Personality in news



Sucheta Kriplani (1908 - 1974)

Eminent Freedom Fighter and India's first women Chief Minister (Uttar Pradesh, 1963) Sucheta Kriplani was remembered on her birth anniversary (June 25).

About Sucheta Kriplani (1908 - 1974)

- She was an **Indian politician and freedom fighter born in Ambala district of Haryana**.
- She was **one of the fifteen eminent women that were part of the drafting committee**.

Key Contributions

- She was a **founding member of the All India Mahila Congress**, founded in 1940.
- She participated in **Quit India Movement** and worked underground to evade arrest.
- She also participated in several **relief activities**, including the 1934 Bihar earthquake, the 1946 Noakhali pre-Partition riots, etc.
- Part of several delegations: **Parliamentary Delegation to Turkey (1954); International Labour Organization (1961), United Nations General Assembly (1949)**, etc.

Values: Courage, Patriotism, Leadership, Compassion, etc.

