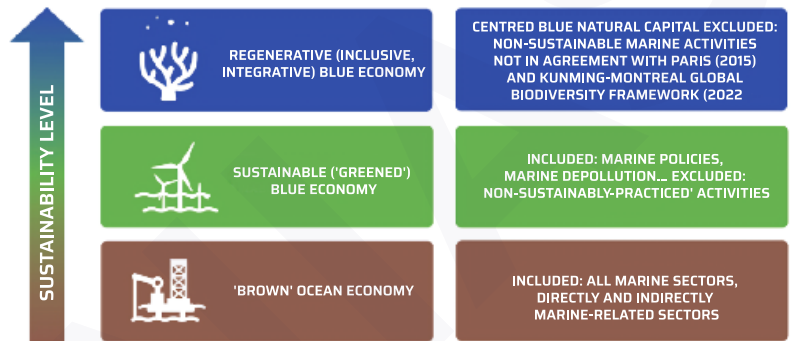


NEWS TODAY

IUCN released a report titled “Towards a Regenerative Blue Economy – Mapping the Blue Economy”

- The report proposes a **clear definition and founding principles** for a Regenerative Blue Economy (RBE).
 - ⊕ IUCN has developed a framework defining **three types of Blue Economy** with RBE at the highest sustainability level (see infographic).
- **Regenerative Blue Economy:**
 - ⊕ It is an economic model that combines **effective regeneration and protection of the Ocean and marine and coastal ecosystems** with **sustainable, low, or no carbon economic activities**, and **fair prosperity**, now and in the future.
 - ⊕ **Founding principles for RBE** would include:
 - ◆ **Protection, restoration, resilience, and regeneration** of marine and coastal ecosystems, marine resources, and natural capital as priorities.
 - ◆ **Prioritise inclusion, fairness, solidarity, well-being and resilience** of impacted population.
 - ◆ **Inclusive and participatory governance system** with scientific assessments.
 - ◆ **Needs of coastal populations, indigenous peoples** must be taken into account.
 - ⊕ **Certain activities are excluded** from its scope either due to **incompatibility with carbon reduction** objective such as oil extraction, or threats to marine ecosystems such as deep-sea mining.
- **Recommendations for RBE:** Redirecting finance to regenerative activities, expanding science and innovation base in global south, empowering local stakeholders to deliver ocean action etc.



Initiatives promoting RBE:

- **Global:** IUCN's Nature 2030, Great Blue Wall Initiative, Clean Seas Campaign, Moroni Declaration and Cape Town Manifesto.
- **India:** Maritime India Vision 2030, Deep Ocean Mission, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

Supreme Court expressed disappointment at inadequate implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 across states

- **Issues highlighted in implementation of RPwD Act across states:**
 - ⊕ **Non-appointment of State Commissioner for PwDs under Section 79.**
 - ◆ State Commissioner acts as regulatory body and monitors fund disbursement and implementation of the act.
 - ⊕ **Non-creation of State Fund for PwDs under Section 88** to provide financial support for PwDs.
 - ⊕ **Non-constitution of Special Courts & non-appointment** of Special Public Prosecutors for speedy trials.
 - ⊕ **Not having assessment boards** for disability certificates and providing high support for persons with benchmark disabilities.
 - ⊕ **Non-constitution of an Authority** for providing limited guardianship (system of joint decision operating on mutual understanding and trust between guardian and PwD).
- **About RPwD Act 2016**
 - ⊕ Act was enacted to give effect to the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.
 - ⊕ Administered by **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJ&E)**.
 - ⊕ **Salient Features:**
 - ◆ **Act covers 21 disabilities** including physical and intellectual disabilities, mental illness, blood disorders, neurological conditions etc.
 - ◆ **Right to free education** for child (6 to 18 years) with benchmark disability.
 - ◆ **5% reservation** in Government and Government aided **higher educational institutions** and **4% reservation in Government jobs**.
 - ◆ **Penalties for offences** committed against PwDs.



Way Forward

- **All states should fulfil their obligations** under RPwD act at the earliest including appointing state commissioners, creation of state funds etc.
- State governments should **frame appropriate rules** for functioning of authorities under RPwD act.
- MoSJ&E should establish **robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** ensuring better compliance and implementation of the Act.

'Re-aligning Agri-food Policies for Protecting Soil, Water, Air & Biodiversity (SWAB)'

- ICRIER released a **report on Agri-Food Trends and Analytics** which sheds light on the influence of agri-food policies on India's agricultural production and emphasizes on synergy of SWAB for sustainable food systems.
- **Impact of agri-food policies on SWAB**

	Current Status/ Issues	Recommendations
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 36% of soil samples in India exhibit organic carbon deficiency. ➤ Only 34% of nitrogenous urea is absorbed by crops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Switch to direct cash transfer instead of fertilizer subsidies. ➤ Brick making should switch from using top soils to fly-ash of thermal plants.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Share of groundwater irrigation increased from 29% to 60%, while that of canal irrigation has reduced from 40% to 25% between 1950-51 and 2021-22. ➤ Availability of free and unmetered electricity resulted in disproportionate extraction of groundwater and decline in water levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote micro-irrigation such as drip and sprinkler systems. ➤ Diversification of crop procurement aligned to local agro-ecologies. ➤ Alter rice cultivation and irrigation practices, including the adoption of alternate wetting drying, Direct Seeded Rice, etc.
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ India's agriculture sector, excluding land use change and forestry emissions, contributed 13.44% of overall GHG emissions in 2023. ➤ Emission Intensity of crops is increasing whereas it is declining for livestock sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Premium MSP for low-carbon crops to encourage farmers shift to low-carbon cultivation practices. ➤ Explore carbon market for carbon farming credits in agriculture sector.

UK Parliament passed bill to send asylum seekers to Rwanda

- UK Parliament passed the **Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill** which will give Britain's immigration authorities power to send any asylum seeker entering the UK "illegally" after January 2022 to Rwanda.
 - ⊕ It will **apply to anyone who arrives in UK without prior permission**, even if their aim is to claim asylum on legitimate grounds.
- **Ethical issues with the Bill**
 - ⊕ **Violation of rule of law:** Override any law preventing a migrant identified for removal from being deported, and compel courts and tribunals to treat Rwanda as a "safe country".
 - ⊕ **Inhumane treatment:** Amnesty International and other groups have criticized Rwanda's human rights record, alleging instances of ill-treatment of dissidents, journalists, and refugees.
 - ⊕ **Violation of the principle of non-refoulement:** This is a core principle of international refugee law which prohibits transfer of refugees to a country where they may face persecution or danger.
- **The 1951 Refugee Convention**
 - ⊕ Convention, along with its 1967 protocol, is one of the key **legal instruments governing refugee protection with non-refoulement as its core principle**.
 - ⊕ With **149 State parties to either (Convention or Protocol) or both**, they outline refugees' rights and States' legal obligations to protect them.



India's stand on Refugee Convention

- India is **not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol** and does not have a national refugee protection framework.
- However, India continues to **grant asylum to a large number of refugees from neighboring States** and respects UNHCR's mandate for other nationals, mainly from Afghanistan and Myanmar.
- It conducts **refugee status determination (RSD)** for **asylum-seekers from non-neighboring countries** before grant of asylum.

Denying Women Child Care Leave (CCL) is violation of Constitution: Supreme Court (SC)

- Recently, a 2-judge bench of the SC directed the government of Himachal Pradesh to review its policies on CCL concerning working mothers, especially mothers of children with special needs.
- **Key highlights of the SC Directive**
 - Court observed that **where the state is the employer of a working mother, it cannot be ignorant of her responsibilities at home** while serving the state.
 - **Participation of women in workforce** is a constitutional entitlement **protected by Article 15** of the Constitution.
 - ◆ **Article 15** provides that State shall not discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them.
 - **Maternity benefits** given for delivering the child were **not sufficient and are perhaps distinct from the concept of CCL.**
- **About Child Care Leave (CCL)**
 - **Rule 43-C of the Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972** provides for 2 years (730 days) of CCL to female employees with children under 18 years of age to look after their kids.
 - ◆ This leave can be used for **any child-related needs like exams or illness.**
 - ◆ **State of Himachal Pradesh has not adopted** these provisions of CCL.
 - **There's no age limit in case of disabled child.**

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017

- Provides for **26 weeks of paid maternity leave** to women workers.
 - ⊕ Out of these 26 weeks, **not more than 8 weeks shall be preceding the expected date of delivery.**

Supreme Court asked the Government to act on FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods) firms using misleading advertisements

- Court also requested Union Ministries to detail the **actions taken to combat deceptive advertising practices**, which negatively impact public lives.
- **Misleading Advertisements**
 - ⊕ Misleading advertising is **any published claim** that gives a consumer an **incorrect understanding of the product or service.**
 - ⊕ Under **Consumer Protection Act 2019**, an advertisement is misleading if it
 - ◆ Falsely describes a product/service,
 - ◆ Gives a false guarantee to nature, quantity or quality of product/service,
 - ◆ Represents unfair trade practice, or
 - ◆ Deliberately conceals important information.
- **Impact of misleading advertisements**
 - ⊕ Violates consumers' **right to information and choice**
 - ⊕ Potential to cause consumer **financial loss and mental agony**
 - ⊕ Severe **repercussions on consumer health and safety**, especially with advertisements of drugs or medical devices of questionable efficiency.
- **Initiatives Taken to combat misleading advertisements**
 - ⊕ **'Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022'** issued by Central Consumer Protection authority (CCPA).
 - ⊕ **Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954:** It prohibits advertisement for remedies alleged to possess magic qualities.
 - ⊕ **Consumer Protection Act, 2019:** Establishes CCPA to regulate matters relating to misleading advertisements.
 - ⊕ **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006:** Penalty for misleading advertisements pertaining to food.

Also in News



Schengen Area

- European Union (EU) has adopted new visa rules for Indian travellers to allow multiple-entry Schengen Visa with longer validity.
- **About Schengen area**
 - ⊕ It is **world's largest free travel area comprising 27 countries.**
 - ⊕ 27 countries include **23 of the 27 EU members and all members of the European Free Trade Association** (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland).
 - ⊕ **Started in 1985 as an intergovernmental project** between **5 EU countries**– France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.



Pulicat Lake

- Tamil Nadu government is planning to denotify a sizeable area of Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary.
- **About Pulicat lake**
 - ⊕ Located along the coast of Bay of Bengal at the border of **Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu.**
 - ⊕ **Second largest brackish water lake** in India after Lake Chilika in Odisha.
 - ⊕ Sriharikota Island **separates lagoon from Bay of Bengal.**
 - ⊕ It is fed mainly by the **river Kalangi and the river Arani.**
 - ⊕ Supports largest congregation of **Flamingos.**



ASEAN Future Forum

- External Affairs Minister for India participated virtually in the first 'ASEAN Future Forum', held in Hanoi, Vietnam.
 - ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) is an **intergovernmental organization** aimed primarily at **promoting economic growth and regional stability** among its 10 members.
- About ASEAN Future Forum**
 - It was **proposed by Vietnam** at the **43rd ASEAN Summit** in 2023.
 - It is a **common platform for ASEAN member states** as well as **partner countries** to share new ideas and policy recommendations.
 - It aims to contribute to **promoting and shaping ASEAN's development path**.



Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF)

- C-DOT and IIT Jodhpur signed an agreement for "Automated Service Management in Network of 5G and beyond Using AI" under the TTDF.
- About TTDF**
 - Launched by the **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)**, a body under the Department of Telecommunications.
 - Aims to **fund R&D in rural-specific communication technology applications** and form synergies among academia, start-ups, industry, etc. to build and develop the telecom ecosystem.
 - The scheme entails **grants to Indian entities to encourage and induct indigenous technologies** tailor-made to meet domestic needs.



Compulsory Convertible Debentures (CCD)

- Competition Commission of India** approved subscription to CCD of Napino Auto and Electronics Limited by **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**.
- About CCD**
 - CCDs** are debt instruments that are convertible into equity at a specified time or on happening of specified event(s).
 - These are **hybrid securities** as they initially behave like debt instruments but eventually convert into equity shares.
 - It is often used by companies for **raising long-term funds** without immediately diluting equity shareholding of existing investors.



WHO Sodium Benchmarks

- World Health Organization (WHO) has released the 2nd edition of its global sodium benchmarks for different food categories.
- About Sodium Benchmarks**
 - Part of a broader WHO initiative to reduce sodium consumption and prevent chronic conditions related to high blood pressure and obesity.
 - Benchmarks provide **reference values for sodium content** to assess progress in reducing sodium consumption.
 - For adults**, WHO recommends less than **2000 mg/day of sodium** (equivalent to less than 5 g/day salt).



WTO Agreement on Safeguards

- India and other members** of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) criticised **European Union's** decision to extend its existing safeguard measure on steel products.
- Under **WTO Agreement on Safeguards**, members can **temporarily** restrict imports of a product if it threatens to cause **serious injury to their domestic industry**.
- About WTO Agreement on Safeguards**
 - Agreement **prohibits grey-area measures** – using bilateral negotiations to pursue exporting countries to restrain exports voluntarily.
 - It sets **time limits** on all safeguard actions, which should **not last more than four years**, although this can be extended up to eight years.



Miyawaki Method

- Embassy of Israel in India joined 'Million Miyawaki' project, a community-led initiative aimed at improving air quality in Indian cities through mass afforestation urban spaces.
- About Miyawaki Method**
 - Based on work of **Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki**, it **enhances green cover within a limited area**.
 - It involves **cultivating multi-layered forests** that exhibit **rapid growth and replicate natural biodiversity** found in native forests.
 - Such forests **lack some qualities of natural forests**, like medicinal properties and ability to bring rain.
 - Benefits:** Mitigate ecological impact of mining activities, creating carbon sinks, etc.

Personality in news



Narasimha Gopaldaswami Ayyangar (1882-1953)

- Madras City Cooperative Building Society Ltd. completes 100 years of which **N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar was the first president**.
- About N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar (1882-1953)**
 - He was an able **administrator, freedom fighter and a politician**.
 - In 1905, he joined the **Madras Civil Service** and was appointed the '**Diwan**' or **Prime Minister of J&K** in 1937.
- Key Contribution**
 - Elected to Council of States (1943-47)**.
 - Part of **7-member Drafting Committee** of Indian Constitution.
 - He helped put in shape **Article 370**.
 - Report on **Reorganisation of the Machinery of Government** in 1949.
 - Served as Minister for Defence, Railways and Transport.
- Values:** Secularism, Patriotism, Objectivity, etc.

