

# NEWS TODAY

## World Trade Organisation (WTO) celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary

WTO was established in 1995 after the Marrakesh Agreement following the Uruguay round negotiation (1986-94) of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

- It succeeded the GATT which had regulated world trade since 1948.

### About WTO

- It is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations.
  - The goal of WTO is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible.

### Key Institutional Mechanism

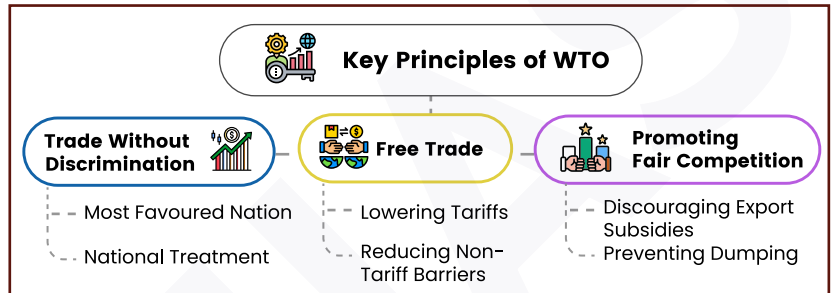
- Ministerial Conference (MC) is highest decision-making body
- Dispute Settlement Body (DSB)

- Members: 166 members representing 98 per cent of world trade

- HQ: Geneva, Switzerland

### Key Agreements of WTO

- The Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS):** Members may not apply any measure that discriminates against foreign products or that leads to quantitative restrictions under WTO principles. E.g., local content requirements.
- Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS):** Plays a critical role in resolving trade disputes over intellectual property.
- Agreement on Agriculture (AoA):** Focuses on agricultural trade liberalization, Addresses market access and domestic support for agricultural producers.
- Other:**
  - Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS).
  - General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).
  - General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).



## Chhattisgarh First State to Link Forest Ecosystem with Green Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Chhattisgarh has introduced an innovative plan that connects ecosystem services of its forests with the Green GDP.

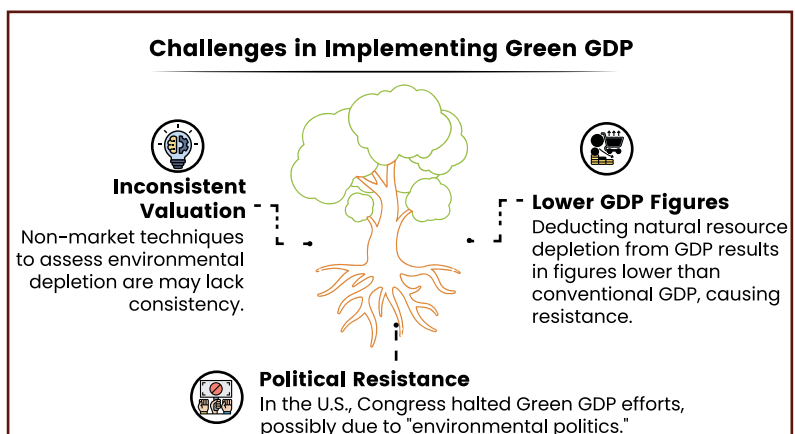
- The move highlight the direct link between significant environmental contributions of forests like clean air, water conservation, biodiversity and the state's economic progress.
  - Forest accounts for Chhattisgarh's 44% of land cover playing crucial role in mitigating climate change.
  - Also, forest products like tendu leaves, lac, honey, and medicinal plants contribute significantly to the rural economy.

### About Green GDP

- Genesis:** 'Green GDP' was coined in the late 1980s with aspiration to modify GDP better to reflect the impacts of economic activities on the environment.
- Definition:** Green GDP refers to environmentally adjusted gross domestic product (GDP).
- Calculation:**
  - Green GDP = Net Domestic Product - (Cost of Depletion of Natural Resources + Cost of Degradation of Ecosystem)
- Need for Green GDP:** GDP overlooks environmental depletion and degradation, often treating them as economic gains.
  - For instance, cutting down a rainforest and selling the timber increases GDP but harms long-term wellbeing and growth.

### Initiatives for Green GDP Accounting

- SEEA:** In 1993, the UN introduced the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) to standardize concepts and methods for producing internationally comparable statistics on the environment and its relationship with the economy.
- WAVES:** Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) is a World Bank initiative to measure, value, and integrate natural capital into national economic accounts for sustainable development.

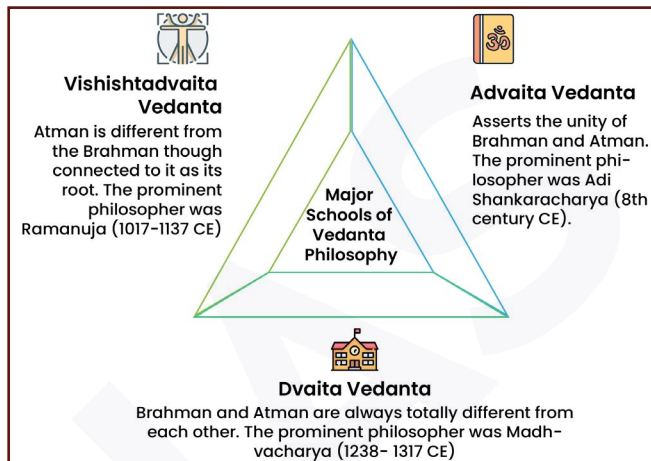


## Vice-President Addressed 27th International Congress of Vedanta in Delhi

The theme of the conference was "Re-imagining Vedāntic World Order" reflecting contemporary relevance of Vedant.

### About Vedant Philosophy

- **Meaning:** Vedanta means "the end of the Vedas," originally referring to the **Upanishads**, the concluding parts of the Vedic texts.
  - ⊕ However, it also includes various **interpretations of the Upanishads**.
- **Philosophy:** Vedanta, the **Uttara-Mimāṃsā** philosophical thought, **addresses profound questions** like :
  - ⊕ 'Who am I?'
  - ⊕ 'What is this Universe?'
  - ⊕ 'How am I related to the Universe?'
- **Key components:** There are three main concepts in Vedanta:
  - ⊕ **Brahman:** The ultimate reality.
  - ⊕ **Atman:** The individual souls.
  - ⊕ **Prakriti:** The physical world.
- **Swami Vivekananda** introduced Vedanta to the West at the **1893 Chicago Parliament of Religions**.



### Contemporary Relevance of Vedanta

- **Democracy and Pluralism:** Vedanta's principle, "**Truth is one, but the wise express it differently**," champions pluralism, coexistence, and dialogue.
- **Oneness of Existence:** Advocates global harmony through **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** ("The world is one family") of Maha Upanishad.
- **Addressing Climate Change:** Promotes sustainable living through the principle of unity with nature.

## MeitY releases Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025 for public consultation

Rules (refer to the infographics) once notified will **facilitate the implementation of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act)**.

### About DPDP Act 2023

- **Background:**
  - ⊕ **2011:** Justice AP Shah Committee recommended privacy legislation
  - ⊕ **2017:** Supreme Court in Justice KS Puttaswamy (Retd) vs Union of India recognized **privacy as a fundamental right**
- **Scope:** Covers **digital personal data** processing in India where such data is **collected online or offline and is digitised**.
- **Data Protection Framework**
  - ⊕ **Obligations for Data Fiduciary** (entity determining purpose and method of data processing)
    - ◆ **User (Data principals) Consent: Personal data may** be processed after obtaining the consent of the individual.
      - » **Consent will not be required for 'legitimate uses'** like if data has been provided voluntarily, provision of benefit or service by the government, medical emergency, etc.
    - ◆ **Processing of personal data of children or a person with disability:** Verifiable consent of parent or the lawful guardian is mandatory.
    - ◆ **Establishment of Data Protection Officer (DPO):** Central Government may notify any Data Fiduciary or class of Data Fiduciaries as Significant Data Fiduciary.
      - » Significant Data Fiduciary shall appoint a **DPO** who shall reside in India and be the **point of contact for the grievance redressal** mechanism.
  - ⊕ **User Rights:** **Right to get a summary** from the Data Fiduciary of how their personal data is being processed, **which other entities have access to their data or any other information related to the personal data**.
  - ⊕ **Enforcement:** Data Protection Board (DPB) **has civil court powers** for personal data breach complaints.

### Highlights of draft rules



#### Breaches must be notified

##### TO USERS

- ▶ Immediate notification
- ▶ Details of breach nature and possible consequences
- ▶ Safety measures

##### TO DATA PROTECTION BOARD

- ▶ Initial alert without delay
- ▶ Detailed report within 72 hours



#### Data retention and deletion obligation (for big platforms)

- ▶ Must delete data after 3 years of inactivity
- ▶ 48-hour advance notice before deletion
- ▶ Exception if retention required by law



#### Parental verification for children's data must be

- ▶ Through reliable ID;
- ▶ Via govt-authorized tokens

#### EXEMPT FROM PARENTAL CONSENT

- ▶ Healthcare services, child welfare services, educational activities, school transport safety and email account creation

## Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) notified amendment in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), 2023

The Amendment has provided **legal backing in the FTP** to make it **necessary** to do consultation with stakeholders including importers/exporters/industry experts concerning the formulation or amendment of the FTP.

- **The amendments made** in the exercise of powers conferred under the **Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992**.

### FTP 2023 and its Key Features

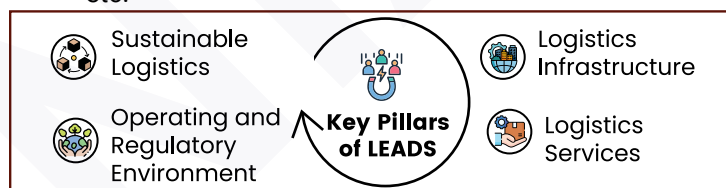
- **Objective:** Aims at process re-engineering and automation to facilitate ease of doing business for exporters.
- **Target:** To take India's exports to 2 trillion dollars by 2030
- **Key Initiatives**
  - ⊕ **Districts as Export Hubs Initiative:** It focuses on the development of logistics, testing facilities, connectivity for exports, etc.
  - ⊕ **Expanded Export Promotion of Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme:** E.g. Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks (PM MITRA) was brought under it.
  - ⊕ **Promoting Cross Border Trade in Digital Economy:** Provided for establishing **E-Commerce Export Hubs (ECEHs)**, etc.
  - ⊕ **Recognition of Exporters:** Exporter firms recognized with 'status' based on export performance will now be partners in capacity-building initiatives.
  - ⊕ **Streamlining SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies) Policy:** To provide access of dual-use High end goods and technologies to Indian exporters while facilitating exports of controlled items/technologies under SCOMET.

## 6<sup>th</sup> edition of Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2024' Report Released

LEADS 2024 is has been released by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

### About LEADS

- **Objective:** Provides insights into improvement of logistics performance at State/UT level.
  - ⊕ LEADS was conceived on the lines of **Logistics Performance Index (LPI)** of **World Bank** in 2018.
    - ◆ While the LPI relies entirely on perception-based surveys, LEADS incorporates both perception as well as **objectivity**.
- **Parameters:** Evaluates logistics performance across four key pillars (refer to infographic).
- **Categories of State/UTs:** They are categorised into four groups **Coastal, landlocked, Northeast and Union Territories**.
  - ⊕ And further they are given tags of **Achievers, Fast movers, and Aspirers** on the basis of their performance.
- **Performance Highlights of 2024**
  - ⊕ **Achievers:** Gujarat, Haryana, Assam, Chandigarh, etc.
  - ⊕ **Fast movers:** Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh etc.
  - ⊕ **Aspirers:** Kerala, West Bengal, Manipur, Chhattisgarh, etc.



### LEAD framework

Ministry also urged logistics sector to adopt **LEAD framework** – Longevity, Efficiency and Effectiveness, Accessibility and Accountability and Digitalisation of processes to transform the logistics sector.

- And also suggested following measures
  - ⊕ Promotion of **green logistics** and **sustainable transport** initiatives.
  - ⊕ Encouraging **public-private partnerships (PPPs)** to enhance **multi-modal logistics hubs**.
  - ⊕ Develop **regional and city-level logistics plans** as well for last-mile connectivity.
  - ⊕ Promote **gender inclusivity**

## Also in News



### Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has revised rules for expert selection for the **Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)** as per reports.

- **New rules** require expert members to disclose conflicts of interest.
- GEAC**
- **About:** India's **apex regulatory body** for genetically modified (GM) seeds.
  - **Genesis:** Constituted as **statutory committee** under the "Rules for the Manufacture, Use/Import/Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells (Rules, 1989)".
    - ⊕ These rules are framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
  - **Responsibilities:**
    - ⊕ **Evaluating large-scale use of hazardous microorganisms and recombinants in research and industrial production** from an environmental standpoint.
    - ⊕ **Appraisal of proposals** relating to **release of genetically engineered (GE) organisms** and products into the environment including experimental field trials



### Melatonin

Scientists have proved that Nano-formulation of Melatonin could be therapeutic solution for **Parkinson's disease (PD)**.

- It could be a potential inducer of **mitophagy** to mitigate PD.
  - ⊕ **Mitophagy** identifies and removes dysfunctional **mitochondria** and reduces oxidative stress.
- **PD** is a neurological disorder caused by the death of **dopamine-secreting neurons** in the brain.

### About Melatonin

- A **neurohormone** secreted from the **pineal gland**, an endocrine gland present in the brain in response to darkness.
- Regulates the sleep-wake cycle (part of **circadian rhythms**) and is used to treat insomnia (sleep disorder).
  - ⊕ Circadian rhythms are the physical, mental, and behavioral changes an organism experiences over a 24-hour cycle.
- Being **exposed to light at night** can block melatonin production.



### State Consent for CBI

Supreme Court held that CBI does not require sanction of a state government to register a case under a Central legislation like the Prevention of Corruption Act against a Central government employee posted in state concerned.

- This overturned an Andhra Pradesh High Court decision that had dismissed cases against central employees due to lack of state consent.

#### About State Consent for CBI

- **Law:** Section 6 of Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946 requires CBI to get state consent for investigations a crime in a state.
- **Two types of consent:** General Consent, and Case-specific Consent.



### BAANKNET (Bank Asset Auction Network)

Ministry of Finance launched a revamped e-auction portal 'BAANKNET'.

#### About BAANKNET

- It consolidates information on e-auction properties from all Public Sector Banks and offers a one-stop destination for buyers and investors to discover a wide range of assets.
- The listings include residential properties such as flats, independent houses, and open plots, as well as commercial properties, industrial land and buildings, shops, etc.
- The platform is expected to unlock the value of distressed assets and boosting investor confidence.



### Human metapneumovirus (HMPV)

China is experiencing a surge in HMPV cases, particularly in children under 14 years of age.

#### About HMPV

- A respiratory virus that causes mild infections similar to that caused by a common cold.
  - ⊕ Discovered in 2001, it belongs to the Pneumoviridae family along with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).
- **Transmission:** Spreads from person to person or surfaces to person.
- **Symptoms:** Cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath.
- **Treatment:** Currently, there is no specific antiviral therapy to treat HMPV and no vaccine to prevent HMPV.



### PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM)

Manastu Space (IIT Bombay startup) successfully tested their green propulsion system VYOM 2U onboard PSLV C60 in space using POEM-4.

- POEM-4 offers triple the capacity of its predecessor, POEM-3.

#### About POEM

- **Launched by:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
- **Purpose:** To provide a cost-effective platform for on-orbit experiments. So far. Launching proprietary systems into space has traditionally been prohibitively expensive for smaller entities.
- **Working:** Transforms PSLV's fourth stage into a free-flying space testbed in low Earth orbit.
- **Strategic importance:** Reduces entry barriers for startups, promotes space technology innovation in India.



### Atomic Clock

Quantum-based atomic clock to has been developed in United Kingdom

#### About Atomic clock

- Atomic clock, type of clock that uses certain resonance frequencies of atoms (usually cesium or rubidium) to keep time with extreme accuracy.
  - ⊕ It is claimed that Quantum-based atomic clock will lose less than one second over billions of years, allowing scientists to measure time at an unprecedented scale.

#### Benefits of Quantum-based atomic clock:

- Increasing accuracy of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS),
- Enhance the accuracy of advanced weapon systems, like guided missiles etc.



### Island Development Agency (IDA)

The Union Home Minister chaired the 7th meeting of the Island Development Agency (IDA).

#### About IDA

- **Genesis:** Set up in 2017
- **Aim:** To promote holistic development of Islands
  - ⊕ IDA reviews the progress of different developmental projects.

### Personality in news



### Rani Velu Nachiyar (1730 –1796)

Prime Minister paid tribute to Rani Velu Nachiyar on her birth anniversary.

#### Rani Velu Nachiyar

She was princess of Ramanathapuram (Tamil Nadu) and child of ruler of Ramnad kingdom.

- Known by Tamils as Veeramangai.
- Reinherited Sivagangai kingdom of her husband.
- She was proficient in languages like French, English, and Urdu.

#### Contributions

- Was first queen to have ever actively opposed the British rule.
- In collaboration with Hyder Ali and Gopala Nayaker, waged war against British.
- Went on to produce first human bomb and established first army of trained women soldiers.

**Values:** Bravery, leadership, etc.

