

NEWS TODAY

WHO launches "3 by 35" initiative to raise prices of tobacco, alcohol and sugary drinks

Initiative aims to raise prices on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks by **at least 50%** through **health taxes over next 10 years**.

- Launched initiative **can mobilize an additional US\$ 1 trillion** in public revenue globally over next decade.
- This Initiative functions as a **collaborative alliance with** coordinated efforts from **coalition of development partners, civil society, academic institutions, and national governments**.

What is Health Tax?

- **Levied on products** that have a **negative public health impact** e.g. Tobacco, Alcohol etc.
- WHO recommends taxation as one of the most **cost-effective tools for addressing obesity** and other related non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Need for Health Tax

- **Health Impact:** Consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks **fuels the NCD epidemic which accounts for over 75% of global deaths**.
- **Economic Impact:** These products create negative externalities (**costs to others**) and **internalities (hidden costs to consumers)**.
 - ⊕ Tobacco use alone costed the global economy **US\$ 1.4 trillion in 2012**.
- **Revenue Generation:** **50% tax** can generate up to **US\$ 3.7 trillion in new revenue globally within five years**, or an average of **US\$ 740 billion per year – equivalent to 0.75% of global GDP**.
- **Promote Equity:** As NCDs impact **lower-income populations disproportionately**.

Successful Global Case Studies

- **Colombia (2016):** Increase in taxation of cigarettes in Colombia causes **34% drop in cigarette consumption**
- **Saudi Arabia:** A 50% sugar sweet and beverages (SSB) tax resulted in a 19% decrease in consumption of SSBs within a year.

Steps taken in India for curbing consumption of Unhealthy Products

- **Aerated beverages in India** are taxed at **28% GST and an additional 12% Compensation cess**.
- **High-fat sugar Salt (HFSS)** foods in India are taxed at a **12% GST rate**.
- **FSSAI limits Trans fatty acids (TFA)** in food products to 2% by mass of total oils and fats.

Rise of Global South shaping new World Order: India

Indian Prime Minister highlighted that the **World Order** created after **World War II (WWII)** is changing rapidly, driven by the rise of the Global South.

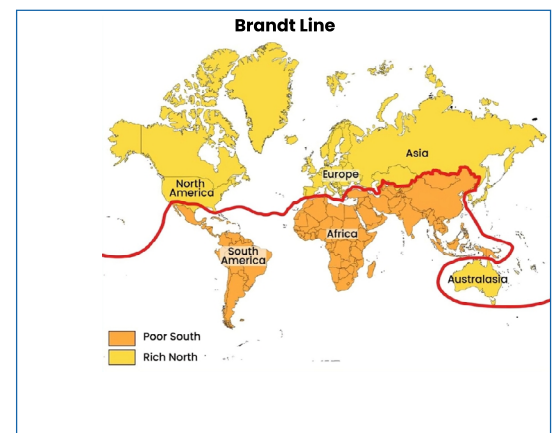
- Post-World **WWII**, global power dynamics became **bipolar**, dominated by the **USA** and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (**USSR**) or **Soviet Union**.
- However, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the **United States** remained the sole superpower, marking the beginning of a unipolar world order.

What is Global South?

- It refers to technically and socially less developed countries which are located in the Southern Hemisphere, primarily in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- **Brandt Report** proposed a division between North and South countries based on various parameters such as technological advancement, GDP etc.

How is the rise of the Global South reshaping the World Order?

- **Economic Growth:** Global South accounts for 40% of world trade. (**UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**).
 - ⊕ The rapid economic growth of countries like China, India, etc. has significantly altered global **economic dynamics**.
- **Strengthening Alternative Institutions:** E.g. **New Development Bank (NDB)** and **BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**.
- **Assertive Diplomacy:** E.g. establishment of the **loss and damage fund** at COP27
 - ⊕ Countries are also pushing for reforms in United Nations and other global organisations (E.g. G77).
- **Demographic Strength:** Global South accounts for the majority of the world's population, with many nations experiencing a **demographic dividend**.
- **Other:** Vibrant South–South Cooperation, etc.



OPCW convened the 23rd Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia in New Delhi

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) convened the meeting in collaboration with India's **National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC)**.

- This regional meeting is part of the OPCW's ongoing efforts to support the effective implementation of the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**.
- OPCW is the **implementing agency** of the **CWC**.

About Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC)

- **Genesis:** In 1992, a draft Convention was formally adopted by the **Conference on Disarmament**. And, it came into force in 1997
- It is the **World's first multilateral disarmament agreement** to provide for the elimination of an entire category of **weapons of mass destruction** within a fixed time frame.
- **Parties:** It has 193 States Parties
 - ⊖ **India** is an original signatory to the Convention.
- **Recognition:** OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 2013.
- **India & CWC:** NACWC is responsible for implementing the Convention in India. NACWC was established under the **Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000**.
 - ⊖ In 2024, **Indian Chemical Council (ICC)** was awarded the **OPCW-The Hague Award**, marking the first time a chemical industry body **anywhere in the world** received this honour.
 - ◆ The award acknowledged **ICC's contributions** to advancing the goals of the Convention and improving **industry-wide safety** and security practices in India.
 - ◆ ICC is India's **oldest Chemical Industry Association**.

Chhattisgarh Forest Department withdraws directive on Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR)

Directive restricted other government departments, NGOs, and private entities from working on Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR) **undermining the Forest Rights Act (FRA)**.

- The directive was **initially issued to align CFRR with the National Working Plan Code 2023**.

About CFRR

- CFRR are provided under **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (Forest Rights Act 2006)**
- It includes the right to **"protect, regenerate or conserve or manage"**(via gram sabha) the **community forest resource(CFR)**.
 - ⊖ CFR area is **common forest land** that has been **traditionally protected and conserved for sustainable use** by a particular community.
- These rights allow **the community to formulate rules for forest use by itself** and others and thereby discharge its responsibilities under FRA.

What is the National working Plan code 2023?

- Released by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate change** in 2004 and amended in 2014.
- Acts as the guiding principle for the preparation of the **working plan for scientific management of different forest divisions of our country**.

About Forest Rights Act, 2006

- **Objective:** To undo historical injustice occurred to forest dwelling communities; ensure their livelihood & food security etc.
- **Forest Rights Recognized Under FRA:**
 - ⊖ **Individual Rights:** Rights of Self-cultivation & Habitation, In-situ rehabilitation etc.
 - ⊖ **Community Rights:** Grazing, Fishing & access to Water bodies in forests, right to intellectual property & traditional knowledge, right to protect traditional customary rights etc.

Strengthening Chemical Industry in India

NITI Aayog recently released 'Chemical Industry: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains' report providing an extensive analysis of India's chemical sector.

- It highlights that **fiscal and non-fiscal interventions will lead to a USD 1 trillion chemical sector** and achieve 12% GVC share by 2040.
 - Currently **India's share** in global chemical value chains is **3.5%**. (India is **6th largest chemicals producer globally**)

Challenges of Chemical Industry:

- Heavy reliance on imported feedstock:** This contributed to a USD 31 billion trade deficit in 2023, stemming from limited domestic backward integration.
- Low investment in R&D:** 0.7% of investment against the global average of 2.3%, hampers indigenous innovation in high-value chemicals.
- Skill Shortage:** 30% shortfall in skilled professionals.
- Other Challenges:** Infrastructure limitations, Logistics inefficiencies, Complex regulatory frameworks etc.

Way Ahead

- Targeted government support such as **Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to catalyze investments.**
- Establish world-class chemicals hubs** in India and Introduce an Opex (operational expenditure) subsidy for chemicals with high import dependence, export potential, and end-market criticality
- Fast-track environmental clearance** and **Securing FTAs** to support Industry growth.

Also in News



Surveillance Pricing

New York State was sued by the National Retail Federation over surveillance pricing.

About Surveillance Pricing (Personalized or dynamic pricing)

- It refers to the practice where **businesses/Online Retailers** use data collected about individuals to **adjust prices of products** or services.
- This data can include **browsing history, location, purchase history, and more.**



Kariyachalli island

Uninhabited Kariyachalli island has sunk significantly over the past few decades due to rapid erosion and rising sea levels.

About Kariyachalli island:

- Location:** Between Rameshwaram and Thothukudi in the **Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park region, Tamil Nadu.**
- Tamil Nadu Sustainably Harnessing Ocean Resources (TNSHORE) project** will try to restore the reefs around the island with **artificial modules, planting seagrass beds and reviving marine life.**



Apache AH-64E

Apache AH-64E combat helicopters are expected to be delivered to India soon, according to recent reports.

About Apache AH-64E

- One of the **most advanced and lethal multi-role attack helicopters** in the world.
- A **fully integrated weapon system** equipped with **Hellfire missiles, rockets, and chain gun.**
- Has **advanced sensors, radar, and night vision capabilities**



Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) **has cleared capital acquisition proposals for nearly ₹1.05 lakh crore.**

About DAC

- It serves as the apex body for **strategic defence acquisition planning and oversight, ensuring coordinated decision-making** across India's defence establishment.
- Chairman:** Union Minister of Defense
- Functions:**
 - Give **'in principle' approval to Capital acquisitions** in the Long Term Perspective Plan.
 - Monitor the progress** of major projects.
- Grants **acceptance of necessity for acquisition** proposals



Global Peace Index, 2025

19th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI) has been released by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

About Global Peace Index (GPI)

- It included 163 countries.
- It uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators across three domains:
 - Level of Societal Safety and Security;
 - Extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict
 - Degree of Militarisation.

Key Findings:

- Average level of global peacefulness deteriorated
- South Asia, the **second least peaceful region globally**, experienced the largest regional decline in peacefulness.
- Ranking:** Iceland has been placed at first place.
 - India's rank is 115th.
 - Russia (163 Rank) is the least peaceful country



Polar Anticyclone

Recently Chile and Argentina were ranked among the **coldest places on Earth outside the polar regions, owing to the polar anticyclone.**

About Polar Anticyclones

- They are **wind systems** associated with a region in which **high atmospheric pressure develops.**
- They are created by the **cooling of surface layers of air.**
- This cooling **causes the air near the surface** to become denser, which **causes an inflow of air at high levels to replace the denser, sinking air.**
- These processes increase the **mass of air above the surface, thus creating the anticyclone.**
 - ⊕ Anti-cyclone is a **high-pressure area surrounded by low-pressure zones.**
 - ⊕ Air-movement in anticyclone is outward and **clockwise in Northern Hemisphere**, outward and **anti-clockwise in Southern Hemisphere.**



International Olympic Committee (IOC)

Recently, IOC flagged two issues i.e. governance crisis in Indian olympics association and rise in doping violations in the background of India's pitch to host the 2036 Olympics.

About IOC, 1894

- **Type:** Independent, non-profit international organization.
- It is the **guardian** of the **Olympic Games.**
 - ⊕ It also supports the promotion of ethics and good governance in sport.
- **Members** -The IOC members are representatives of the IOC in their respective countries, and not their country's delegate within the IOC
- **Funding**- Entirely privately funded
- **Hq**- Lausanne, Switzerland.



Kashmiri Pashmina shawl

Indian Prime Minister during his Ghana visit gifted handcrafted artefacts such as **Kashmiri Pashmina shawl** to the country's top leaders.

Kashmiri Pashmina shawl

- It is woven from the fine undercoat of the **Changthangi goat.**
- Celebrated for its softness and warmth

Other Handicrafts

- **Bidriware vases (Bidar, Karnataka):** The vases feature a **zinc-copper alloy base** with a distinctive black finish and fine silver inlay.
 - ⊕ These are engraved with floral motifs, they symbolise beauty, prosperity and harmony.
- **Silver filigree purse (Cuttack, Odisha):** It is known for its **Tarakasi work.**
 - ⊕ The purse combines intricate floral and vine designs with modern style.
- **Miniature Ambawari elephant (West Bengal):** It is handcrafted from **polished synthetic ivory** – an ethical alternative to natural ivory.

Please note: All the listed handicrafts, except the Miniature Ambawari Elephant, have been granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.



Blue Nile

Construction of Ethiopia's Grand **Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)** on **Blue Nile** has been completed.

- It is considered **Africa's largest hydroelectric project.**

About Blue Nile

- It is a major tributary of the Nile River
- **Origin-** lake Tana of Ethiopia
- **Course-** Flows into Sudan to meet white Nile to form Nile at Khartoum.
- **Countries covered-** Ethiopia and Sudan



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR