

# NEWS TODAY

## Ministry Of Rural Development (MoRD) Hosted 'The National Conclave On Gender Mainstreaming'

The conclave held under **DAY-NRLM** (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission) was focused on **strengthening gender-responsive community institutions (GRCI)**.

- DAY-NRLM is the flagship program under MoRD for **promoting poverty reduction through building strong institutions of the poor, particularly women**.
  - ⊕ DAY-NRLM programme also **recognises violence against women and girls as a major hindrance** towards achieving their individual and social development.

### About GRCI

- Gender-responsiveness means **paying attention to the unique needs of females by valuing their perspectives, understanding developmental differences between girls and boys, and thereby empowering girls and women (UNICEF)**.
- Although there is no official definition, **GRCI** generally refers to the **community institutions employing gender considerations to influence the design, implementation and results of policies**.
  - ⊕ Example, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Village Organizations (VOs), Cluster Level Federations, Women-Led Organisations (WLO), etc.

### Role of GRCI

- **Gender-sensitive society:** They **raise awareness** around risks to the rights of women and girls, ensure **effective implementation of women centric policies** and **demand accountability**.
- **Inclusive development:** Such organisations are critical in providing essential **services to women, girls, and other marginalized groups**.
- **Better response to crisis:** They can also play a key role in **supporting community outreach** and ensuring no one is left behind in humanitarian response.

### Initiatives taken towards Gender-responsiveness

- **Nayi Chetna – Pahel Badlav ki:** A national campaign for eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence. It is driven by **DAY-NRLM** with support from **UNICEF, Gates Foundation and civil society partners**.
- **Uddeshya - Towards Gender Responsive Urban Mobility Systems:** It is a nationwide convening towards fostering gender-responsive mobility planning by World Resource Institute- India.
- **Gender Budgeting: Gender-responsive budgeting** by setting up **Gender Budgeting Cells** in the Ministries and Departments.
- **Nirbhaya Fund: A non-lapsable corpus fund for safety and security of women** administered by the Department of Economic Affairs (Ministry of Finance).

## NGT orders classification of Nainital town based on carrying capacity and environmental sensitivity

The order was issued by National Green Tribunal (NGT) while hearing a case of **unauthorised large-scale tree cutting**, allegedly harming the forest areas and **affecting recharging of Naini Lake**.

### Key Highlights of the Order

- Classification of town into **development or prohibited zone** and **regulated zones** based on environmental conditions.
- **Rehabilitation of lakes:** State government was directed to implement catchment area treatment plans for lakes in the district.
- **Creation of master plans and determination of carrying capacity of Nainital** based on factors such as **hydrology, sanitation load bearing, vegetation and current tourism trends**.

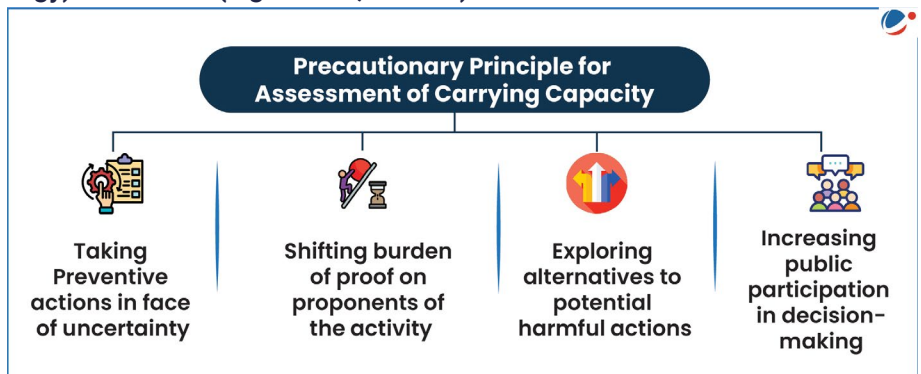
### What is Carrying Capacity?

- It refers to the **maximum threshold of population an area can bear in relation to the available resources**.
- It depends on both **biotic (e.g. vegetation, hydrology)** and **abiotic (e.g. terrain, climate)** factors.

### Two major approaches for assessing Carrying Capacity:

- ⊕ **Planetary boundaries approach:** Applied in the context of environmental crises such as global warming, land degradation, pollution, water stress.
- ⊕ **Biocapacity Overshoot approach:** It is a sustainability metric about the demand humans put on the earth systems by consuming total annual productivity of natural systems within a few months every year. **e.g., Earth Overshoot Day**.

- **Significance:** Carrying capacity assessment based on **precautionary principles** (refer infographic) provides the option to practically deal with the tussle between **'developmental governance'** and **'sustainability of development'**.



## India signed first-of-its-kind agreements under IPEF

Recently, India signed and exchanged first-of-its-kind agreements focused on **Clean Economy, Fair Economy**, and IPEF Overarching arrangement under **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) for Prosperity**.

- IPEF is structured around **4-pillars** relating to **Trade (Pillar I); Supply Chain Resilience (Pillar II); Clean Economy (Pillar III); and Fair Economy (Pillar IV)**.
- Previously, India had **ratified Agreement on Supply Chain Resilience (Pillar II) in February 2024** and has maintained an **observer status in Pillar-I**.

### IPEF Clean Economy Agreement (Pillar-III)

- **Development and deployment of clean energy technologies:** To accelerate energy security, climate resilience, and emissions mitigation among IPEF partners.
- **Investments and capacity building:** For industries, especially MSMEs and integrate Indian companies into global value chains through collaborative programs such as IPEF Catalytic Capital Fund, IPEF Accelerator, etc.

### IPEF Fair Economy Agreement (Pillar-IV)

- **Transparent and predictable trade and investment environment:** By combating corruption and supporting initiatives to improve tax transparency, domestic resource mobilization, and tax administration.
- Enhancing **information sharing**, facilitating **asset recovery**, and strengthening **cross-border investigations and prosecutions**.

### Overarching IPEF Agreement

- **Aim:** Establish a **high-level political oversight framework at Ministerial level** over various **individual IPEF agreements**.
- **Significance:** Provide **identity to the group and longevity to IPEF partnership** by creating a **formal mechanism**, potential to **enhance India's productive capacity, integration into supply chains**, etc.

#### About IPEF

- **Launched in:** 2022 at Tokyo, Japan.
- **Member Countries (14):** Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and USA.
- **Objective:** To strengthen economic engagement and cooperation among partner countries with the goal of advancing growth, economic stability and prosperity in the region.
- **Initiatives under IPEF**
  - ⊕ **IPEF Upskilling Initiative:** For women and girls in IPEF emerging and middle-income partner countries.
  - ⊕ **Critical Mineral Dialogue:** Aimed at strengthening the critical mineral supply chain and ensuring sustainable mining practices in the region.
  - ⊕ **Others:** Tech Council, Cooperative Work Program (CWP), etc.

## Quad Released 'Principles for Development and Deployment of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)'

The principle for DPI was released acknowledging the **importance of digitalisation to transform societies** and to achieve the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### About DPI

- DPI is a digital network that enables countries to **safely and efficiently deliver economic opportunities and social services to all residents**.
  - ⊕ DPI can be **compared to roads**, which form a physical network that **connects people** and provides access to a huge range of goods and services.
  - ⊕ **'India Stack'** is India's own foundational DPI.

### Quad's Key Principles for DPI

- **Inclusivity:** Eliminate economic, technical & social barriers, empowerment of end-users, and avoid erroneous algorithmic bias.
- **Collaboration:** Enable development of **user-centric solutions and facilitate sustained adoption** and allow innovators to develop new services.
- **Modularity and Extensibility:** A modular architecture to **accommodate changes/modifications** without undue disruption.
- **Scalability:** Use flexible design to easily **accommodate any unexpected increase in demand**.
- **Sustainability:** Ensure sustainability through **adequate financing and technological support**.
- **Other Principles:** Interoperability, respect for human rights, grievance redress, contribute to SDGs, protect intellectual property rights, **Governance for Public Benefit, Trust, & Transparency, ensure Security and Privacy**.

#### Other Global Initiatives for Adoption of DPI

- **Announced by G20 India Presidency (2023):**
  - ⊕ **One Future Alliance:** It is a voluntary aimed at **building capacity** for implementing DPI in low- and middle-income countries.
  - ⊕ **Global DPI Repository (GDPIR) portal:** It was designed, developed and rolled out by India.
  - ⊕ **Social Impact Fund (SIF):** Announced for accelerating DPI implementation across Global South nations
- **International organizations:** Development organisations including the **World Bank, UNDP** and philanthropies like the **Gates Foundation** are establishing specialised programmes focused on DPI.

**NOTE:** To know more about DPI, kindly refer News Today dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024.

## Union Cabinet approved continuation of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats

Recently, Union Cabinet approved continuation of **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH)** for the **15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission cycle**.

- ▶ While strengthening existing fundamental & core components of scheme, the scheme envisages boosting technological interventions in different thematic areas in tiger and wildlife-bearing forests.

### About IDWH

- ▶ **Objective:** It is a **centrally sponsored umbrella scheme** launched by Ministry of Environment for development of wildlife habitat in India.
- ▶ **Components of IDWH**
  - ⊕ **Support to protected areas** (national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation reserves, and community reserves).
  - ⊕ Protection of **wildlife outside protected areas**.
  - ⊕ **Recovery programs** for saving critically endangered species and habitats.
    - ◆ So far, **22 species** have been identified under the Species recovery program.
- ▶ **Sub-schemes Under IDWH**
  - ⊕ **Project Tiger (1973):** It benefits a total of **55 TRs spread across 18 tiger range states**, distributed in 5 landscapes of the country.
    - ◆ It also supports the ambitious **Project Cheetah** in the country.
  - ⊕ **Development of Wildlife Habitats:** Project Dolphin and Project Lion are implemented under this sub-scheme.
  - ⊕ **Project Elephant (1992):** To protect elephants, their habitat, & corridors to address issues of human-animal conflict and welfare of captive elephants.
    - ◆ It is being implemented in **22 elephant range states/ UTs**.

**Note: Project Tiger and Project Elephant schemes have been merged w.e.f. FY 2023-24 and now known as Project Tiger & Elephant.**

## Prime Minister Attends the Sixth Quad Leaders' Summit in Wilmington (US)

Reiterating that the Quad remains a **"force for global good"**, the Leaders' Summit adopted the **'Quad Wilmington Declaration'** to take the agenda forward.

### Key Announcements in the Declaration

- ▶ **Health Security: 'Quad Cancer Moonshot'**, a partnership to save lives in the Indo-Pacific region by combating cervical cancer.
- ▶ **Quality Infrastructure:** 'Quad Ports of the Future Partnership' which will harness the Quad's collective expertise to support sustainable port infrastructure development.
- ▶ **Critical and Emerging Technologies:** A 'Semiconductor Supply Chains Contingency Network Memorandum of Cooperation' to enhance resilience of Quad's semiconductor supply chains.
- ▶ **Climate and Clean Energy:** Collective Quad effort to boost energy efficiency, including deployment and manufacturing of **high-efficiency affordable cooling systems** in the region.
- ▶ **Space:** India's establishment of a **space-based web portal for Mauritius**, to support the concept of **open science** for space-based monitoring of extreme weather events and climate impact.
- ▶ **Maritime Security:**
  - ⊕ **'Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI)'** to maximize tools provided through Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (announced in 2022) and other Quad initiatives.
  - ⊕ **'Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission' in 2025** to improve interoperability and advance maritime safety.

### About Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

- ▶ **Members:** The Quad is a **diplomatic partnership** (not a military alliance) between **Australia, India, Japan, and the US**.
- ▶ **Purpose:** It is committed to supporting an **open, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific** that is **inclusive and resilient**.
- ▶ **Key Summit:** Quad Leaders' Summits and Foreign Ministers' Meetings are held on an **annual basis**.
  - ⊕ **Quad Leaders' Summit 2025** will be hosted by **India**.

## Also in News



### Infrasound

**Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)** is holding a workshop for scientists on using 'infrasound' for monitoring nuclear tests with the industry.

- ▶ Set up in **1996**, CTBTO is an interim organization tasked with building up the **verification regime of the CTBT (India is not a signatory)**.

### About Infrasound

- ▶ Refers to **low-frequency sound waves with a spectrum between 0.002 and 20 Hertz (Hz)** that are below the range of human hearing.
- ▶ **Microbarometers** are used to **detect minute changes in atmospheric pressures caused by infrasounds**.
- ▶ **Sources:** Natural (Earthquakes, volcanic explosions, etc.) and non-natural (mining, chemical explosion, nuclear explosions, etc.)
- ▶ **Applications:** Detection of distant nuclear explosions (CTBTO's International Monitoring System (IMS)), checking structural health of infrastructure, wildlife tracking, etc.



### FIDE Chess Olympiad

Recently, **Indian contingent won Gold** in both open and women's category at the **45<sup>th</sup> International Chess Federation (FIDE) Olympiad**.

### About 45<sup>th</sup> FIDE Chess Olympiad

- ▶ **Organised in:** Budapest, Hungary.
  - ⊕ **44<sup>th</sup> Chess Olympiad** took place for the **first time in India (Chennai)**.
- ▶ Trophy for the winning team in the **open section** is the **Hamilton-Russell Cup**.
- ▶ Trophy for the winning team in the **women's section** is the **Vera Menchik Cup**.

### About FIDE

- ▶ It's the governing body of the **sport of chess**, and it regulates all **international chess competitions**.
- ▶ Constituted as a **non-governmental institution**, it was recognized by **International Olympic Committee** as a **Global Sporting Organization** in **1999**.



### Exercise Eastern Bridge VII

The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Exercise Eastern Bridge** between **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and the **Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO)** concluded.

- It was held at Masirah (Oman).



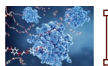
### Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare jointly issued an **advisory to all States** and UTs for the rigorous implementation of the **ToFEI** manual in line with COTPA, 2003.

- Tobacco-Free Educational Institution (ToFEI) was launched as part of the **National Tobacco Control Program**.
- 8.5% of school students** in the age group of 13 to 15 consume tobacco in different forms across the country (Global Youth Tobacco Survey, 2019)

#### About COTPA, 2003

- Prohibit advertisement**, regulate **trade, production, supply and distribution** of cigarettes and other tobacco products.
- Prohibits the sale of tobacco products in an area within a **radius of 100 yards** of any educational institution.



### Nanozymes

A CSIR-CLRI study has found that **nanozymes can ensure collagen's integrity and enhance resistance to enzymatic degradation**.

- Collagen** is the most abundant protein in the human body. It is found in the bones, skin, muscles, and tendons.

#### About Nanozymes

- Nanozymes are **nanomaterial-based artificial enzymes** with intrinsic enzyme-like properties.
- Unlike biological enzymes, nanozymes are typically inorganic materials, i.e., **metals, metal oxides, or carbon-based nanostructures**.
- Advantages:** High stability, easy modification, designability, ease of preparation, and low cost.
- Applications:** **Biomedical** (Biosensing, Drug delivery, diagnosis and therapy, etc.), **Environmental Remediation** (Water Purification, Air Purification, etc.), among others.



### ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)

During 12<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit Economic Ministers Meeting in Lao PDR, India called for expeditious review of the AITIGA.

#### About AITIGA

- Genesis:** Signed in **2009** and entered into force in **2010**.
- Mandate:** Each party shall accord **National Treatment** to goods of other parties in line with **GATT, 1994**.
- Need for review:** Goods from China and other non-ASEAN nations routing to India taking advantage of duty concessions under AITIGA.
  - ⊖ **ASEAN** constitutes for **about 11% share in India's global trade**
- ERIA:** Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) is collaborating on conducting a **joint study on AITIGA**.



### Legacy Waste

According to Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs' Data, **only 16% of land is reclaimed** under 'legacy waste management project of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2.0'.

- SBM 2.0** mandates all cities to clear legacy waste sites.

#### Legacy Waste

- Definition:** Although there is no official definition of 'legacy waste', it typically refers to the **aged municipal solid waste (MSW) in landfills or dumpsites**.
- Impact:** Releases greenhouse gases, contamination of soil and groundwater, etc.
- Ways to deal:** Sustainable **SWM management plan**, maximum utilisation of recovered fractions, **building capacity** of urban departments, **reusing reclaimed land sustainably**.



### Nagar Van Scheme

**111 Nagar Vans** have been sanctioned within the last 100 days.

#### About Nagar Van Scheme

- Launched in:** 2020.
- Aim:** To develop **1000 Nagar Vans by the year 2027** with financial support of **National Fund of National Compensatory Afforestation Management & Planning Authority (CAMPA)**.
- Launched by:** Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, to **promote urban forestry/ greenery** by involving local communities, NGOs, educational institutions, local bodies, etc.
  - ⊖ Provision has been made on **MeriLiFE** portal for uploading details of plantations done.
- Significance:** Protecting urban forests, addresses environmental concerns like air pollution, urban heat islands, biodiversity loss etc.

## Places in News



### Sri Lanka [Capital: Colombo]

**Sri Lanka [Capital: Colombo]** (Executive and Judicial); **Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte** (a Colombo suburb; Legislative)]

Recently, **Sri Lanka** elected its 10<sup>th</sup> President.

#### Political Features

- Location:** An island country in the **Indian Ocean** separated from peninsular India by **Palk Strait**.
- Maritime Boundaries:** **India** (North) and **Maldives** (South-west)

#### Geographical Features

- Geologically, it is considered a **southerly extension of peninsular India**.
- Longest river:** Mahaweli Ganga River.
- Highest Peak:** Pidurutalagala.
- Biodiversity:** Western Ghats of India and Sri Lanka biodiversity hotspot is often regarded as one unit because of shared biogeographical history.
  - ⊖ **Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay** form a **transboundary area** within the waters off **India and Sri Lanka**.
  - ⊖ Populations of **dugongs** and **large seagrass meadows** are found in this area.

**Culture:** Majority population practise **Theravada Buddhism** (orthodox school of Buddhism).

