

Prelim Bits 01-11-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

UNESCO has published the new list of 55 creative cities on World Cities Day (Oct 31st), in which 2 Indian cities Kozhikode and Gwalior were included.

UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)	
Launch Year	2004
Eligibility	UNESCO's member states and associate members
Updation Time	Once every 2 years
Total Cities (2023)	350 in more than 100 countries

- **Objective** - It aims to strengthen cultural activities, goods, services and international cooperation for sustainable development.

UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) aims for Sustainable Cities and Communities.

7 Creative Fields of UCCN	Indian Cities in UCCN
Crafts and Folk Arts	Jaipur (2015), Srinagar (2021)
Design	-
Film	Mumbai (2019)
Gastronomy	Hyderabad (2019)
Literature	Kozhikode (2023)
Media Arts	-
Music	Chennai (2017), Varanasi (2015), Gwalior (2023)

Kozhikode is the **1st Indian city** to get City of Literature tag.

- The selected cities will participate in UCCN annual conference in 2024 in Braga, Portugal, under the theme '**Bringing youth to the table for the next decade**'.

References

1. [The Hindu | Kozhikode is the first City of Literature in India](#)
2. [UNESCO | 55 new cities joined UCCN](#)
3. [UNESCO | UCCN](#)

Road Accidents in India Report, 2022

The annual publication of Road Accidents in India report was unveiled recently by the Union Ministry of Road transport and Highways.

- **Objectives** - It serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders in the realm of road safety.
- It also sheds light on emerging trends, challenges, and the Ministry's road safety initiatives.
- **Data Source** - Received from state/ UTs police departments in standardized formats as provided under the Asia Pacific Road Accident Data (APRAD) base project of UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP).

Findings of 2022 report

According to the report, road accidents claimed 19 lives in India every hour and a total of 1.68 lakh lives in 2022.

The number of road accidents in 2022 increased by 11.9% compared to 2021.

- **Area of accidents** - 32.9% in National Highways, 23.1% in Road Highways and 43.9% in other roads.
- **Rural Vs Urban** - About 69% happened in rural areas and around 32% in urban areas.
- **Age group** - 66.5% of young adults (18-45 years of age).
- **Type of users** - 44.5% of 2-wheelers followed by 19.5% of pedestrians.
- **Vehicles involved** - Two-wheelers tops for the 2nd consecutive years followed by light vehicles.

*In 2022, **Tamil Nadu topped in number of road accidents** followed by Madhya Pradesh and **Uttar Pradesh topped in number of fatalities** due to road accidents followed by Tamil Nadu.*

References

1. [PIB | Annual Report on Road Accidents in India](#)
2. [Annual Accidents in India | 2022 Report](#)

Commodity Market Outlook Report

According to World Bank report, global economy is better placed than in the 1970s, but escalation of the west Asian conflict with disruptions from the Russian invasion of Ukraine could lead to a dual shock.

- It is a *bi-annual report* (April & October) published by the **World Bank**.
- **Objectives** - To provide *market analysis for major commodity groups* like energy, metals, agriculture, precious metals, and fertilizers.
- It *forecasts prices for 46 key commodities*, including oil.

Commodity markets is a place which involves trading i.e., buying and selling of various commodities and their derivative products.

Dual shocks in commodity markets refers to disruption in energy market as well as intensified food insecurity.

Key takeaways from the report

- **Overall commodity prices** - They are projected to fall 4.1% in 2024 and are *expected to stabilise in 2025*.
- **Oil prices** - It is expected to average \$90 a barrel in 2023's last quarter before falling to \$81 a barrel in 2024 as global economic growth slows.
- **Agriculture Prices** - They are expected *to decline in 2024* as supplies rise.
- **Metal prices** - They are also projected *to drop 5% in 2024*.
- **Gold prices** - It have *risen about 8%* since the onset of the conflict.
- **Food prices** - They are expected to *fall by 8 percent in 2023* and 3 percent in 2024.

Urals oil is considered to be of poor quality compared to Brent oil and it is usually sold at a discount of USD 2-3 per barrel against Brent oil.

- **Food Insecurity** - In 2022, nearly 10% of the global population were undernourished and India's ban on exports of non-basmati rice has shaken global markets.

India accounts for nearly 40% of the world's rice exports.

- **Recommendations** - All countries to bolster their energy security by accelerating the *transition to renewable energy sources* to mitigate the effects of oil-price shocks.

References

1. [The Indian Express | Impacts of conflicts in commodity market](#)
2. [World Bank | Commodity Market Outlook](#)

Deep Ocean Mission

As part of Deep Ocean Mission, India will for the 1st time, embark on a journey to a depth of 6,000 metres in the ocean using an indigenously developed submersible.

- It is one of 9 missions under Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PMSTIAC).
- **Ministry** - Ministry of Earth Sciences
- **Project duration** - 5 years (since 2021)
- **Funding**- 4,077 crore
- **Aim** - To help India in achieving target of over *Rs. 100 billion "Blue Economy"* through its ocean resources

Countries such as the U.S.A., Russia, China, France, and Japan have already achieved successful deep-ocean crewed missions.

- **Objectives**

- To develop technologies for exploration and conservation for sustainable utilization of marine bio resources.
- To provide ocean climate change advisory services.
- To develop renewable energy generation techniques and to explore the avenues of desalination of water.

- **Components**

- Development of Technologies for Deep Sea Mining, and Manned Submersible - India's 1st manned ocean mission, Samudrayan was launched in 2021.
- Development of Ocean Climate Change Advisory Services
- Technological innovations for exploration and conservation of deep-sea biodiversity
- Deep Ocean Survey and Exploration
- Energy and freshwater from the Ocean
- Advanced Marine Station for Ocean Biology

Matsya-6000 is an indigenously developed deep-ocean submersible vehicle to accommodate 3 members (aquanauts) with an operational endurance of 12 hours to 96 hours.

- **Collaborative Institutions for Deep Ocean Mission**

- Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE)
- Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)
- National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR)
- National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)
- National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)

The United Nations (UN) has declared 2021-2030 as the "Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development".

References

1. [The Hindu| India in deep Ocean exploration](#)
2. [PIB| Deep Ocean Mission](#)

International Solar Alliance Assembly

India hosts the 6th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) started in New Delhi in 2023.

- **ISA Assembly** - It is the apex decision-making body of ISA and meets annually at the ministerial level at the ISA's seat.

International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an international organisation with 109 member countries which works to improve energy access and security worldwide and promote solar power as a sustainable way to transition to a carbon-neutral future.

- **Presidency** - The Republic of India holds the office of the President of the ISA Assembly, with the Government of the French Republic as the co-president.
- **Participants** - Member and signatory countries.
- **Activities** - It makes decisions concerning the implementation of the ISA's Framework Agreement.
- It assesses the aggregate effect of the programmes and other activities in terms of deployment of solar energy, performance, reliability, cost, and scale of finance.

Renewable energy sources have the potential to supply 65% of the world's total electricity by 2030 and decarbonise 90% of the power sector by 2050.

6th Assembly of ISA

- **President** - Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Government of India.
- **Deliberation** - On 3 critical issues energy access, energy security, and energy transition.
- **Focus**
 - Universalisation of energy access through solar mini-grids.
 - Mobilising Finance for accelerated solar deployment.
 - Diversifying supply chains and manufacturing for solar.
- **Decisions** - It decides to increase Viability Gap Funding Cap for solar projects from 10% up to 35% of project cost.
- ISA will share India's successful practices with developing countries

References

1. [PIB| India hosts 6th assembly of ISA](#)

2. [PIB| ISA Assembly](#)

Other Important News

Varaha

- It is a self-propelled, indigenously made deep-ocean mining vehicle.
- It is a part of India's Deep Ocean Mission.
- Positioned at a pre-surveyed mineral-rich site, Varaha uses a high-power pressure pump system to facilitate the extraction of precious polymetallic nodules.
- These nodules are pumped from the ocean bed to the surface ship.

Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) Platform

- Prime Minister launched MY Bharat platform for youth of the country at Kartavya Path on the National Unity Day (October 31).
- It aims to facilitate youth development and youth-led development.
- It is a 'Phygital Platform' (physical + digital) comprising physical activity along with an opportunity to connect digitally.
- Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), an autonomous body, will benefit the youth in the age group of 15-29 years.

Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary

- The Goa bench of the Bombay High Court directed the Goa government to notify a tiger reserve in Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) and other contiguous areas of the state within 3 months.
- The sanctuary is located in Goa, Western Ghats of South India.
- It was established in the forests spread within the Mhadei River basin in the year 1999 with an objective to protect **Bengal Tigers** living in this area.

Aarambh 5.0

- Prime Minister will address the Officer Trainees of the 98th Common Foundation Course at the culmination of Aarambh 5.0.
- Aarambh was launched in 2019 by bringing together all trainees of the All-India Civil Services and Group-A Central Services.
- The course provides a first-hand introduction to the ideas, challenges and responsibilities of governance in a large and diverse country, the release said.
- The 5th edition of Aarambh is being held on the theme of 'Harnessing the power of disruption'.

One Nation One Registration Platform

- National Medical Commission (NMC), the regulatory body for medical education and medical professionals, is all set to launch its one nation, one registration platform.
- It aims to eliminate duplication, red tape and allow the public to access information on any physician working in India.
- The platform will generate UIDs for all practicing doctors.

LCH Prachand

- The indigenously developed Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) 'Prachand', successfully carried out inaugural firing recently.
- It was designed, developed and extensively test-flown by **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)**.
- The LCH is the only attack helicopter in the world that can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 metres (16,400 ft), which makes it ideal to operate in the high altitude areas of the Siachen glacier.
- It is also capable of firing a range of air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles and can destroy air defence operations of the enemy.

Ban on Manjha threads

- The Tamil Nadu government has enforced a complete ban on the sale, storage, purchase, import and use of manjha threads.
- Manjha threads refers to kite flying threads made of nylon, plastic or any other synthetic material which causes severe injury or even death of people and animals.
- The contravention of the ban shall be penalised under **provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- The ban comes after the National Green Tribunal in 2017 had imposed a total ban on Manjha threads and other synthetic threads.

Rohini Nayyar Prize

- The 2nd edition of Rohini Nayyar Prize was presented to **Deenanath Rajput**, for his work on empowering tribal women in Bastar, Chhattisgarh.
- It is a prize to recognize the exemplary contributions of young Indians, under the age of 40 years, towards improving the lives of people in rural India.
- The prize was presented in memory of late economist-administrator Dr Rohini Nayyar.

IL-38 Sea Dragon

- The Ilyushin-38 Sea Dragon was recently decommissioned at INS Hansa, Dabolim in Goa.
- The IL-38 Sea Dragon is a long-range maritime patrol aircraft that was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1977.

Khela Hobe Scheme

- It is a scheme to provide employment to the people of West Bengal on the lines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- It is a 100-day job scheme like MGNREGA.

