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PM-STIAC

Recently, the 25th Prime Minister's Science, Technology & Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC), held in New Delhi.

- **Aim-** To discuss robust policy formulation for effective **Carbon Capture Utilisation & Storage (CCUS)** and carbon credits in India.

CCUS involves the capture of CO₂, generally from large point sources like power generation or industrial facilities that use either fossil fuels or biomass as fuel.

- **About-** The PM-STIAC serves as an **overarching council** to assess
 - The status of various science and technology-related matters,
 - Comprehend challenges,
 - Formulate interventions,
 - Develop a futuristic roadmap, and advise the prime minister accordingly.
- **Formed in-** August 2018.
- **Nodal Agency-** Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.
- **Function-** It **oversees the implementation of such interventions** by concerned S&T Departments, agencies and other government Ministries.
- **Objectives of PM-STIAC**
 - Synergize collaborative research in science and technology across central and state governments.
 - Facilitate preparedness for emerging science and technology domains.
 - Formulate and coordinate major inter-ministerial science and technology missions.
 - Ensure an enabling ecosystem for technology-led innovations and entrepreneurship.
 - Address socio-economic challenges for sustainable growth through innovations and technology-based solutions.

- Foster effective public-private linkages to drive research and innovation.
- Develop innovation clusters with academia, industry, and government.
- Enhance skills in current and futuristic technologies.
- **Agenda of meeting-** The meeting also discussed India's carbon market and **carbon credit scheme** to reduce emissions, pursue a low-carbon path, and provide market support for **mitigation methods and technologies**.
- **Emission reduction targets-** India has set a target to achieve a **45% reduction in emission intensity by 2030** and is aiming for **Net Zero by 2070**.



- **Science and Technology Missions of PM-STIAC**
 - Natural Language Translation
 - Quantum Frontier
 - Artificial Intelligence
 - National Biodiversity Mission
 - Electric Vehicles (EV)
 - Bioscience for Human Health
 - Waste to Wealth
 - Deep Ocean Exploration
 - AGNIi (Accelerating Growth of New India's Innovations)

- **TIME-** The ***Indian Museum of The Earth (TIME)*** is one of the initiatives proposed by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- TIME is envisioned as a world-class institution dedicated to the ***study and exhibition of Earth's history and its future.***

References

1. [PIB | PM-STIAC](#)
2. [Invest India | About PM-STIAC](#)

Financial Inclusion Index

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India released its Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index) for FY24.

- **About-** It is a comprehensive index detailing ***banking, investments, insurance, postal, and pension sectors***, created in consultation with the government and sectoral regulators.
- **Released by -** Reserve Bank of India.
- **Year of operation-** 2021, without any 'base year'.
- **Publication duration-** In July every year.
- **Finding-** The financial inclusion across the country, stood at ***64.2 in March 2024 from 60.1 in March 2023.***
- The improvement in the index was due to growth witnessed across all sub-indices.
- **Parameters-** The index captures information on various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging ***between 0 and 100***, where ***0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100*** indicates full financial inclusion.
- **Parameters-** It comprises of 3 broad parameters i.e. ***Access (35%), Usage (45%), and Quality (20%)*** with each of these consisting of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.
- The Index is responsive to ease of access, availability and usage of services, and quality of services, comprising in all 97 indicators.

Global Financial Inclusion Index

- It is a database compiled by the **World Bank** that measures the extent to which individuals around the world have access to and use financial services.
- It provides data on how people save, borrow, make payments, and manage risks.
- The Global Findex database is based on surveys conducted in more than 150 countries, covering over 99% of the world's adult population.
- It is a widely referenced tool for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners interested in understanding and promoting financial inclusion globally.

References

1. [The Hindu | Financial Inclusion-Index](#)
2. [Indian Express | Financial Inclusion-Index](#)

Ibiza wall lizard

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has issued a stark warning about the threats posed by invasive species to several island reptiles.

- The Ibiza wall lizard (*Podarcis pityusensis*) has been **reclassified as endangered** due to a **50% population decline** since 2010.
- **Reasons-** Mainly due to the invasive **horseshoe whip snake (Hemorrhois hippocrepis)**.

*The horseshoe whip snake (*Hemorrhois hippocrepis*) is a species of snake in the family Colubridae which is native to southwestern Europe and northern Africa.*



- **Scientific name-** Podarcis pityusensis
- **Body-** Small to medium-sized lizard with a typical length ranging from 5 to 7 cm, excluding the tail.
- **Coloration-** From gray to brown with darker patterns and sometimes a greenish hue.
- **Habitat-** This species is largely found in vegetated areas, such as cultivated land and gardens, close to and around human habitation.
- It also occurs in **rocky areas**, especially in coastal regions.
- **Behaviour-** Diurnal (active during the day)
- **Food pattern-** The primarily feeds on **insects, spiders, and other small invertebrates.**
- It is known for its agile movements and ability to quickly escape into crevices when threatened.
- **Other Endangered species-** The **Gran Canaria giant lizard** (Gallotia stehlini) and the **Gran Canaria skink** (Chalcides sexlineatus) are now endangered.
- **Reasons-** Due to the introduction of the California kingsnake (Lampropeltis californiae) in 1998, which has caused their populations to decline by more than 50% since 2014.
- The IUCN also highlighted the illegal trade of ornamental cacti, particularly Copiapoa species endemic to Chile's Atacama Desert.
- Currently, 82% of these cacti are critically endangered, a sharp increase from 55% in 2013.
- The demand for these plants, driven by their popularity in Europe and Asia, is exacerbated by illegal trade via social media.

- **About** - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a membership organization that works to protect nature and natural resources.

- **Established in** - 1948 in Fontainebleau, France.

- It was originally called the International Union for the Protection of Nature and later known as the World Conservation Union.

- **Functions** - It provides public, private, and non-governmental organizations with the knowledge and tools to achieve sustainable development.

Red Data List

- **About** - The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, also known as the Red Data Book, is a list of the global conservation status and extinction risk of biological species.

- **Founded in** - 1964

- It is the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, backed by 1,300 member organisations and 16,000 experts.

- It describes itself as the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

- **Functions** - It provides information about range, population size, habitat and ecology, use and/or trade, threats, and conservation actions that will help inform necessary conservation decisions.

References

1. [Down to Earth | Ibiza wall lizard](#)

2. [UNEP | IUCN](#)

Expunction Powers in Parliament

The first special session of the 18th Lok Sabha culminated in a dispute about expunging the remarks of the Opposition leader from the record.

- **Authority** - The **Speaker (Lok Sabha)** and **Chairman (Rajya Sabha)** have the authority to expunge remarks.
- **Rules for Expunction** - The Chairman and Speaker are vested with the power to order the expunction of remarks under **Rule 261, and Rule 380 and 381** of the Rules of Procedure of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, respectively.
- **Rule 261** - If the Chairman deems any words used in debate to be objectionable or offensive, they can direct that such words be expunged from the proceedings.

- **Rule 380** - If the Speaker finds words used in debate to be defamatory, indecent, unparliamentary, or undignified, they may order such words to be expunged from the proceedings.
- **Privileges - Article 105** of the Constitution confers certain privileges and freedom of speech in Parliament on MPs, it is subject to other provisions of the Constitution and the rules of the House.
- **Criteria** - Remarks can be expunged if they are considered **unparliamentary, defamatory, indecent, or offensive**.
- **Certain instances**
 - National interest or detrimental to maintaining friendly relations with a foreign State.
 - Derogatory to dignitaries.
 - Likely to offend national sentiments or affect the religious susceptibilities of a section of the community.
 - Likely to discredit the Army, and not in good taste or otherwise objectionable.
 - Continuous interruptions during speeches may also be expunged at the Speaker's discretion.
- **Purpose** - The decision to expunge is discretionary and made to **maintain decorum** and respect within parliamentary proceedings.
- **Effect** - Expunged remarks are **removed from the official records**, and any publication of the proceedings must exclude these remarks.
- Anyone who publishes them thereafter is liable to face charges for **breach of privilege of the House**.
- **No debate** - The decision to expunge is **final and not subject to debate** or challenge on the floor of the House.

References

[The Hindu | Expunction powers](#)