

17 September, 2024

20th Maritime State Development Council(MSDC)

Context: Recently, the 20th Maritime State Development Council concluded in Goa.

➤ Overview:

- More than 80 critical issues were resolved at the 20th Maritime State Development Council in Goa, focusing on various maritime challenges.
- The Union Minister discussed state and port ranking frameworks to boost maritime sector performance.



➤ About MSDC

- MSDC is an **apex advisory body** for the **development of the maritime sector** and aims to ensure integrated development of Major and non-Major Ports.
- **Constitution:** The MSDC was constituted in 1997 by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- **Mandate:** The council is responsible for the integrated development of major and non-major ports in coordination with state governments.
- **Chair:** The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways chairs the MSDC.
- **Frequency of Meetings:** The MSDC is mandated to meet at least once every six months.
- **Role:** The council has been instrumental in aligning policies and initiatives such as the Indian Ports Bill and the Sagarmala program.

➤ Significance

- **Strategic Importance:** The MSDC's efforts are crucial for enhancing India's maritime infrastructure, security, and operational efficiency.
- **Policy Alignment:** The council's initiatives support national maritime policies and position India globally in maritime dispute resolution.

Key Outcomes of the 20th MSDC

➤ Addressing Emerging Challenges:

- **Places of Refuge:** The meeting discussed the establishment of Places of Refuge for distressed ships.

- **Radioactive Detection:** Development of radioactive detection equipment at ports was proposed to improve security.
- **Seafarer Conditions:** There was a strong advocacy for recognizing seafarers as essential workers to facilitate better working conditions.

➤ New Initiatives Launched:

- **Indian Maritime Centre:**
 - Purpose: Unite maritime stakeholders, promote innovation, strategic planning, and knowledge sharing.
 - Objective: Drive development in India's maritime sector.
- **Indian International Maritime Dispute Resolution Centre:**
 - Purpose: Establish India as a global hub for maritime arbitration.
 - Objective: Align with "Resolve in India" initiative, offer solutions for complex maritime disputes.
- **National Safety in Ports Committee:**
 - Integration: Application on the National Single Window System platform.
 - Objective: Improve business ease, streamline regulatory processes, enhance efficiency.

➤ Showcased State-led Initiatives:

- **Kerala:** Monetization techniques for dredging.
- **Gujarat:** Port-driven urban development projects.

➤ Major Projects and Plans:

- **Largest Dredger Construction:** Initiated at Cochin Shipyard Limited in collaboration with Royal IHC Holland.
- **Mega Shipbuilding Park:** Plan to consolidate shipbuilding capabilities across states to enhance efficiency and innovation.

➤ State Ranking Framework:

- **Purpose:** Promote healthy competition and sustainable practices among coastal states.
- **Objective:** Enhance performance and operational standards.

Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024

Context: Recently, ITU released Global Cybersecurity Index 2024.

➤ Overview:

- Recently, China introduced three key 6G standards via the ITU, advancing global telecom frameworks and performance.
- India has secured a Tier-1 position in the latest Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024,

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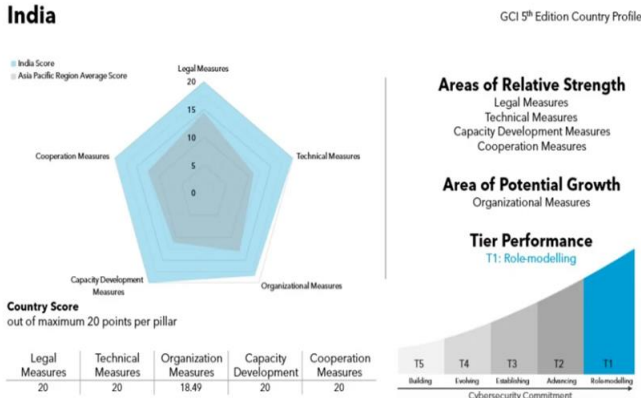


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➤ Overview of Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024:

- **Purpose:** The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024 assesses cybersecurity commitments across five pillars: **legal, technical, organisational, capacity development, and cooperation.**
- **Analysis Method:** The GCI 2024 uses a five-tier system (Tier 1 to Tier 5) to evaluate country advancements and impacts in cybersecurity.

India



➤ Key Highlights:

- **India's Standing:** India is in Tier 1, indicating a strong commitment to all five cybersecurity pillars.
- **Global Trends:** There has been global improvement in cybersecurity since the last GCI publication in 2021, with Africa making the most significant progress.
- **Expansion of Digital Services:** Many countries are in Tier 3 ("establishing") or Tier 4 ("evolving"), showing expanded digital services but needing stronger cybersecurity measures.
- China introduced three key 6G standards through the ITU, aiming to enhance immersive communication, low-latency, and AI integration.

➤ 6G Technology Overview:

- **Development:** 6G is expected around 2030, aiming for higher speeds, reduced latency, and increased bandwidth compared to 5G.
- **Performance:** Features include microsecond-level speeds, latency up to 1,000 times lower than 5G, support for three 160-megahertz (MHz) channels, and integration of AI and machine learning.
- **Security and Efficiency:** Enhanced security measures will address cyber threats and signal jamming. 6G will be more energy-efficient, with dynamic capacity adjustment.

➤ ITU Overview:

- **Genesis:** Established on May 17, 1865, with the signing of the International Telegraph Convention, marking the start of the International Telegraph Union.
- **Role:** ITU is the UN's oldest specialised agency, focusing on global digital technology and communication.

- **Members:** Includes 193 Member States (e.g., India), and other members such as companies and universities.
- **Flagship Reports:** Includes the Global Connectivity Report and the Global e-Waste Monitor.

➤ Key Issues in Cybersecurity:

- **Worrisome Threats:** Includes ransomware attacks, cyber breaches affecting core industries, and costly system outages.
- **Cyber Capacity Gap:** Persistent limitations in skills, staffing, equipment, and funding.
- **Operational Challenges:** Difficulties in implementing and operationalizing cybersecurity agreements.

➤ Key Recommendations:

- **National Cybersecurity Strategy:** Develop and regularly update a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy.
- **Capacity Building:** Focus on training cybersecurity professionals, youth, and vulnerable groups.
- **Cooperation:** Enhance domestic and international cooperation for information-sharing and training opportunities.

Nipah virus

Context: The recent death from Nipah virus in Kerala marks the second case since July.

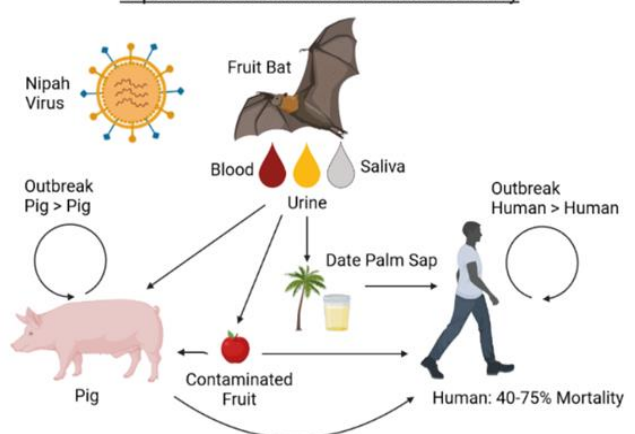
➤ Overview:

- Nipah virus is a WHO priority pathogen due to its epidemic potential, with no vaccine or cure available.
- Parts of Kerala are among those most at risk globally for outbreaks of the virus, a Reuters investigation showed last year.

➤ Nipah Virus overview:

- **Family and Genus:** Paramyxoviridae, Henipavirus
- **Closely Related Virus:** Hendra virus
- **Initial Outbreak:** Malaysia and Singapore, 1998-1999
- **Named After:** Sungai Nipah village, Malaysia

Nipah Virus Transmission and Mortality



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➤ **Transmission:**

- **Primary Reservoir:** Fruit bats (genus *Pteropus*)
- **Intermediate Hosts:** Domestic pigs, dogs, cats, goats, horses, sheep
- **Human Transmission:** Direct contact with infected animals' bodily fluids or secretions; human-to-human via close contact, especially in healthcare settings

➤ **Symptoms:**

- **Early Symptoms:** Fever, headache, drowsiness
- **Progressive Symptoms:** Encephalitis (mental confusion, disorientation, coma)
- **Potential Outcomes:** Severe neurological complications and death

➤ **Diagnosis:**

- **Diagnostic Methods:** RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction), serological tests, virus isolation
- **Differential Diagnosis:** Distinguishing from other viral encephalitides and respiratory illnesses

➤ **Treatment:**

- **Current Options:** Supportive care is the mainstay (managing symptoms, intensive supportive measures)
- **No Specific Antiviral Drugs or Vaccines:** Research is ongoing

➤ **Prevention:**

- **Avoiding Exposure:** Prevent contact with bats and infected animals; use protective gear for healthcare workers
- **Hygiene Practices:** Proper sanitation and hygiene, especially in regions with known outbreaks

➤ **Public Health Significance:**

- **WHO Classification:** Priority pathogen due to its epidemic potential
- **Impact:** High mortality rate in outbreaks; can cause severe outbreaks with significant public health implications

Flying Foxes(Fruit bats)



➤ **Taxonomy:**

- **Family:** Pteropodidae
- **Genus:** *Pteropus* (mainly)
- **Appearance:** Large bats with a fox-like face; wingspan ranges from 60 cm to over 1.5 metres, depending on the species.

➤ **Habitat:**

- **Range:** Tropical and subtropical regions of Asia, Africa, and Oceania.
- **Habitat:** Forests, mangroves, and urban areas; they roost in large colonies in trees.

➤ **Diet and Ecology:**

- **Diet:** Primarily fruits, nectar, and flowers.
- **Ecological Role:** Key pollinators and seed dispersers, contributing to the health of their ecosystems by aiding plant reproduction.

➤ **Zoonotic Significance:**

- **Disease Reservoir:** Natural hosts for viruses like Nipah and Hendra.
- **Transmission:** Can transmit these viruses to other animals and humans, especially through contact with their saliva, urine, or feces.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Booker Prize



Recently, the 2024 Booker Prize shortlist has been announced, with the largest number of women represented in its 55-year history.

About the Booker Prize:

- The Booker Prize is a **literary award** that recognizes the best work of long-form fiction written in English and published in the United Kingdom or Ireland.
- The Booker Prize was established in **1969 by Tom Maschler** and Graham Greene.
- It was **previously known as the Booker Prize for Fiction** (1969–2001) and the **Man Booker Prize** (2002–2019).
- The winner of the Booker Prize receives a **cash award of £50,000**, and each of the **six shortlisted authors receives £2,500**.
- The 2024 Booker Prize shortlist features a record number of women, with **five out of six finalists being female authors**.
- The 2024 shortlist includes authors from five countries, with the **Netherlands** being represented for the **first time**.
- Previous winners of the Booker Prize include prominent authors such as Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, and Arundhati Roy.
- **Arundhati Roy was the first Indian woman to win the Booker Prize in 1997.**

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NPS-Vatsalya Scheme



Launch of
NPS Vatsalya Scheme
by
Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman
Honble Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs,
Government of India
Date: 18th September 2024



In pursuance of the announcement in the Union Budget 2024-25, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will launch the NPS-Vatsalya scheme tomorrow on September 18 in New Delhi.

About NPS-Vatsalya Scheme:

- The NPS-Vatsalya scheme is a **part of the National Pension Scheme (NPS)** that was introduced in the **Union Budget 2024**.
- The scheme is designed to **help parents and guardians save for their children's financial future** by investing in a pension account.
- Parents can invest a **minimum of Rs. 1,000 annually** in the name of their child.
- Once the minor reaches the **age of 18**, the NPS Vatsalya account will automatically **convert into a regular NPS account**.
- It is available to individuals between the **ages of 18 and 70**.
- The scheme offers a **long-term savings** solution that grows with the child.
- The scheme will be run under the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**.
- It is a voluntary pension scheme open to both **residents and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)**.

The Taliban



Recently, the **United Nations (UN)** announced that the **Taliban** has suspended all **polio vaccination campaigns** in **Afghanistan**.

About the Taliban:

- The Taliban officially **formed in 1994 during the Afghan Civil War** and consisted mainly of mujahedeen fighters who had previously fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan from **1969 to 1989**.
- The term Taliban translates to "**students**" in **Pashto**, as many of its members were students from madrassas (religious schools) in **Afghanistan and Pakistan**.
- During the Soviet-Afghan war, the Taliban's precursor, the mujahedeen, received covert support from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).
- In **1996**, the **Taliban captured Kabul**, the capital of Afghanistan and established the **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan**, with Mullah Omar as the head of state.
- The Taliban enforced strict **Shariah law** during their rule, which included severe restrictions on the rights of women and children and led to global criticism for their human rights violations.
- The Taliban were widely condemned for their treatment of women, **their denial of education to girls** and their refusal to allow international aid to reach underserved populations during their rule.

Place in News

Iran

Recently, **Iran's Supreme Leader, Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei**, mentioned **India along with Gaza and Myanmar** as regions where Muslims are suffering.

Iran (Capital: Tehran)

Location: Iran also known as Persia and officially the Islamic Republic of Iran, is a country situated in **Western Asia**.

Boundaries: Iran shares its borders with **Pakistan and Afghanistan (East)**, **Turkey and Iraq (West)**, **Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan** and the **Caspian Sea (North)** and **The Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman (South)**.

Physical Features:

- Karun River** is the most significant river of Iran, flowing through the Zagros Mountains and supporting agricultural activities.
- Mount Damavand** is an **active volcano**, considered a stratovolcano, situated in the Alborz mountain range.
- Iran holds substantial reserves of **oil and natural gas**.

Membership:

Iran is a member of various international organizations including the **United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organization, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, World Health Organization** and **International Atomic Energy Agency**.



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Current affairs summary for prelims

17 September, 2024

POINTS TO PONDER

- Where was Navika Sagar Parikrama II launched? – **Verem, Goa**
- In which year was CERT-In established in India? – **2004**
- Where was Centre for Rural Enterprise Acceleration through Technology (CREATE) inaugurated? – **Leh**
- What is the Bhaskar Initiative? – **Space Research**
- Where was Mpox (formerly Monkeypox) first discovered? – **Denmark, 1958**

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