

World Trade Organisation (WTO) celebrates 30th anniversary

WTO was established in 1995 after the **Marrakesh Agreement** following the **Uruguay round** negotiation (1986-94) of the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**.

- It succeeded the GATT which had regulated world trade since 1948.

About WTO

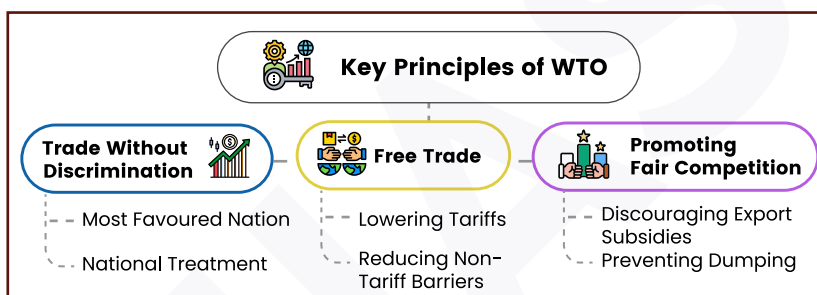
- It is the only global **international organization** dealing with the rules of **trade between nations**.
 - ⊕ The goal of WTO is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible.

➤ Key Institutional Mechanism

- ⊕ **Ministerial Conference (MC)** is highest decision-making body
- ⊕ **Dispute Settlement Body (DSB)**
- **Members:** 166 members representing 98 per cent of world trade
- **HQ:** Geneva, Switzerland

Key Agreements of WTO

- **The Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS):** Members may **not apply any measure** that discriminates against foreign products or that leads to quantitative restrictions under WTO principles. E.g., local content requirements.
- **Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS):** Plays a critical role in resolving trade disputes over intellectual property.
- **Agreement on Agriculture (AoA):** Focuses on agricultural trade liberalization, Addresses market access and domestic support for agricultural producers.
- **Other:**
 - ⊕ Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS).
 - ⊕ General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).
 - ⊕ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).



Chhattisgarh First State to Link Forest Ecosystem with Green Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Chhattisgarh has introduced an innovative plan that **connects ecosystem services of its forests** with the **Green GDP**.

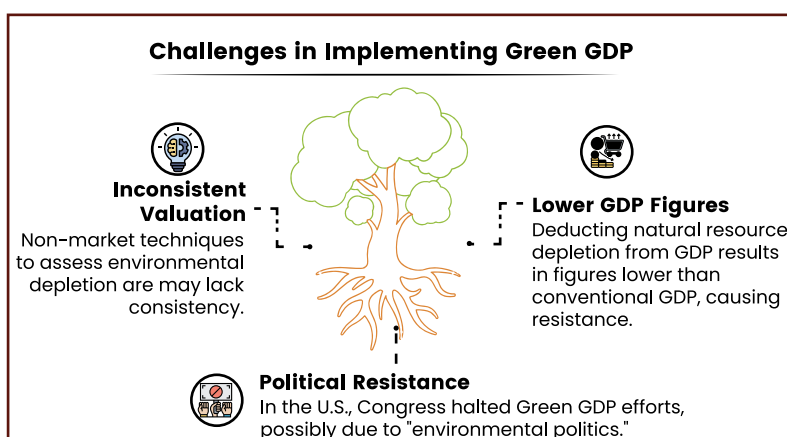
- The move highlight the **direct link** between significant **environmental contributions of forests** like clean air, water conservation, biodiversity and **the state's economic progress**.
 - ⊕ Forest accounts for **Chhattisgarh's 44% of land cover** playing crucial role in **mitigating climate change**.
 - ⊕ Also, forest products like **tendu leaves, lac, honey, and medicinal plants** contribute significantly to the rural economy.

About Green GDP

- **Genesis:** 'Green GDP' was coined in the **late 1980s** with aspiration to modify GDP better to reflect the impacts of economic activities on the environment.
- **Definition:** Green GDP refers to **environmentally adjusted gross domestic product (GDP)**.
- **Calculation:**
 - ⊕ **Green GDP = Net Domestic Product - (Cost of Depletion of Natural Resources + Cost of Degradation of Ecosystem)**
- **Need for Green GDP:** GDP overlooks **environmental depletion and degradation**, often treating them as economic gains.
 - ⊕ For instance, **cutting down a rainforest** and selling the timber **increases GDP** but harms long-term wellbeing and growth.

Initiatives for Green GDP Accounting

- **SEEA:** In 1993, the UN introduced the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) to standardize concepts and methods for producing **internationally comparable statistics on the environment and its relationship with the economy**.
- **WAVES:** Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) is a **World Bank initiative to measure, value, and integrate natural capital into national economic accounts** for sustainable development.

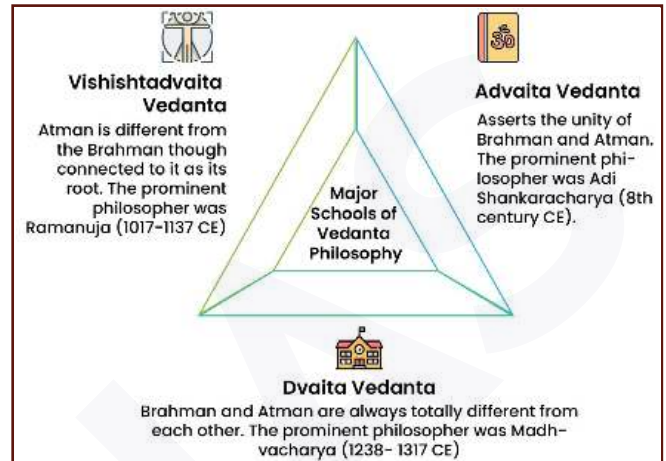


Vice-President Addressed 27th International Congress of Vedanta in Delhi

The theme of the conference was "Re-imagining Vedāntic World Order" reflecting contemporary relevance of Vedant.

About Vedant Philosophy

- **Meaning:** Vedanta means "**the end of the Vedas**," originally referring to the **Upanishads**, the concluding parts of the Vedic texts.
 - ⊕ However, it also includes various **interpretations of the Upanishads**.
- **Philosophy:** Vedanta, the **Uttara-Mimāṃsā** philosophical thought, **addresses profound questions** like :
 - ⊕ 'Who am I?'
 - ⊕ 'What is this Universe?'
 - ⊕ 'How am I related to the Universe?'
- **Key components:** There are three main concepts in Vedanta:
 - ⊕ **Brahman:** The ultimate reality.
 - ⊕ **Atman:** The individual souls.
 - ⊕ **Prakriti:** The physical world.
- **Swami Vivekananda** introduced Vedanta to the West at the **1893 Chicago Parliament of Religions**.



Contemporary Relevance of Vedanta

- **Democracy and Pluralism:** Vedanta's principle, "**Truth is one, but the wise express it differently**," champions pluralism, coexistence, and dialogue.
- **Oneness of Existence:** Advocates global harmony through **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** ("The world is one family") of Maha Upanishad.
- **Addressing Climate Change:** Promotes sustainable living through the principle of unity with nature.

MeitY releases Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025 for public consultation

Rules (refer to the infographics) once notified will **facilitate the implementation of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act)**.

About DPDP Act 2023

- **Background:**
 - ⊕ **2011:** Justice AP Shah Committee recommended privacy legislation
 - ⊕ **2017:** Supreme Court in Justice KS Puttaswamy (Retd) vs Union of India recognized **privacy as a fundamental right**
- **Scope:** Covers **digital personal data** processing in India where such data is **collected online or offline and is digitised**.
- **Data Protection Framework**
 - ⊕ **Obligations for Data Fiduciary** (entity determining purpose and method of data processing)
 - ◆ **User (Data principals) Consent:** **Personal data may** be processed after obtaining the consent of the individual.
 - » **Consent will not be required for 'legitimate uses'** like if data has been provided voluntarily, provision of benefit or service by the government, medical emergency, etc.
 - ◆ **Processing of personal data of children or a person with disability:** Verifiable consent of parent or the lawful guardian is mandatory.
 - ◆ **Establishment of Data Protection Officer (DPO):** Central Government may notify any Data Fiduciary or class of Data Fiduciaries as Significant Data Fiduciary.
 - » Significant Data Fiduciary shall appoint a **DPO** who shall reside in India and be the **point of contact for the grievance redressal** mechanism.
 - ⊕ **User Rights:** **Right to get a summary** from the Data Fiduciary of how their personal data is being processed, **which other entities have access to their data or any other information related to the personal data**.
 - ⊕ **Enforcement:** Data Protection Board (DPB) **has civil court powers** for personal data breach complaints.

Highlights of draft rules



Breaches must be notified

TO USERS

- ▶ Immediate notification
- ▶ Details of breach nature and possible consequences
- ▶ Safety measures

TO DATA PROTECTION BOARD

- ▶ Initial alert without delay
- ▶ Detailed report within 72 hours



Data retention and deletion obligation (for big platforms)

- ▶ Must delete data after 3 years of inactivity
- ▶ 48-hour advance notice before deletion
- ▶ Exception if retention required by law



Parental verification for children's data must be

- ▶ Through reliable ID;
- ▶ Via govt-authorised tokens

EXEMPT FROM PARENTAL CONSENT

- ▶ Healthcare services, child welfare services, educational activities, school transport safety and email account creation

Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) notified amendment in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), 2023

The Amendment has provided **legal backing in the FTP** to make it **necessary** to do consultation with stakeholders including importers/exporters/industry experts concerning the formulation or amendment of the FTP.

- The amendments made in the exercise of powers conferred under the **Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992**.

FTP 2023 and its Key Features

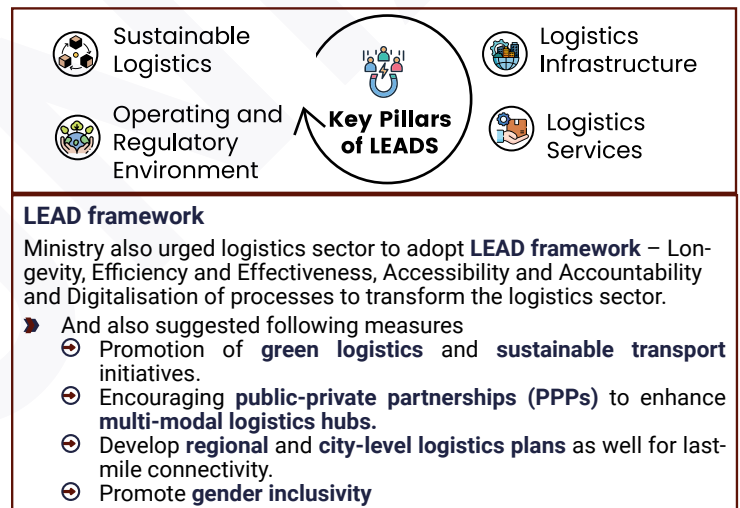
- **Objective:** Aims at process re-engineering and automation to facilitate ease of doing business for exporters.
- **Target:** To take India's exports to 2 trillion dollars by 2030
- **Key Initiatives**
 - ⊕ **Districts as Export Hubs Initiative:** It focuses on the development of logistics, testing facilities, connectivity for exports, etc.
 - ⊕ **Expanded Export Promotion of Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme:** E.g. Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks (PM MITRA) was brought under it.
 - ⊕ **Promoting Cross Border Trade in Digital Economy:** Provided for establishing **E-Commerce Export Hubs (ECEHs)**, etc.
 - ⊕ **Recognition of Exporters:** Exporter firms recognized with 'status' based on export performance will now be partners in capacity-building initiatives.
 - ⊕ **Streamlining SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies) Policy:** To provide access of dual-use High end goods and technologies to Indian exporters while facilitating exports of controlled items/technologies under SCOMET.

6th edition of Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2024' Report Released

LEADS 2024 is has been released by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

About LEADS

- **Objective:** Provides insights into improvement of logistics performance at State/UT level.
 - ⊕ LEADS was conceived on the lines of **Logistics Performance Index (LPI)** of **World Bank** in 2018.
 - ◆ While the LPI relies entirely on perception-based surveys, LEADS incorporates both perception as well as **objectivity**.
- **Parameters:** Evaluates logistics performance across four key pillars (refer to infographic).
- **Categories of State/UTs:** They are categorised into four groups **Coastal, landlocked, Northeast and Union Territories**.
 - ⊕ And further they are given tags of **Achievers, Fast movers, and Aspirers** on the basis of their performance.
- **Performance Highlights of 2024**
 - ⊕ **Achievers:** Gujarat, Haryana, Assam, Chandigarh, etc.
 - ⊕ **Fast movers:** Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh etc.
 - ⊕ **Aspirers:** Kerala, West Bengal, Manipur, Chhattisgarh, etc.



Also in News



Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has revised rules for expert selection for the **Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)** as per reports.

- **New rules** require expert members to disclose conflicts of interest.
- GEAC**
- **About:** India's **apex regulatory body** for genetically modified (GM) seeds.
 - **Genesis:** Constituted as **statutory committee** under the "Rules for the Manufacture, Use/Import/Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells (Rules, 1989)".
 - ⊕ These rules are framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
 - **Responsibilities:**
 - ⊕ **Evaluating large-scale use of hazardous microorganisms and recombinants in research and industrial production** from an environmental standpoint.
 - ⊕ **Appraisal of proposals** relating to **release of genetically engineered (GE) organisms** and products into the environment including experimental field trials



Melatonin

Scientists have proved that Nano-formulation of Melatonin could be therapeutic solution for **Parkinson's disease (PD)**.

- It could be a potential inducer of **mitophagy** to mitigate PD.
 - ⊕ **Mitophagy** identifies and removes dysfunctional **mitochondria** and reduces oxidative stress.
- **PD** is a neurological disorder caused by the death of **dopamine-secreting neurons** in the brain.

About Melatonin

- A **neurohormone** secreted from the **pineal gland**, an endocrine gland present in the brain in response to darkness.
- Regulates the sleep-wake cycle (part of **circadian rhythms**) and is used to treat insomnia (sleep disorder).
 - ⊕ Circadian rhythms are the physical, mental, and behavioral changes an organism experiences over a 24-hour cycle.
- Being **exposed to light at night** can block melatonin production.



State Consent for CBI

Supreme Court held that **CBI does not require sanction of a state government to register a case under a Central legislation** like the Prevention of Corruption Act **against a Central government employee** posted in state concerned.

- This **overturned an Andhra Pradesh High Court decision** that had dismissed cases against central employees due to lack of state consent.

About State Consent for CBI

- **Law:** Section 6 of **Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946** requires CBI to get state consent for investigations a crime in a state.
- **Two types of consent:** General Consent, and Case-specific Consent.



BAANKNET (Bank Asset Auction Network)

Ministry of Finance launched a revamped e-auction portal '**BAANKNET**'.

About BAANKNET

- It **consolidates information on e-auction properties from all Public Sector Banks** and offers a **one-stop destination for buyers and investors** to discover a wide range of assets.
- The listings include residential properties such as **flats, independent houses, and open plots, as well as commercial properties, industrial land and buildings, shops, etc.**
- The platform is expected to **unlock the value of distressed assets** and boosting investor confidence.



Human metapneumovirus (HMPV)

China is experiencing a surge in HMPV cases, particularly in children under 14 years of age.

About HMPV

- A **respiratory virus** that causes **mild infections** similar to that caused by a common cold.
 - ⊕ Discovered in **2001**, it belongs to the **Pneumoviridae family** along with **respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)**.
- **Transmission:** Spreads from person to person or surfaces to person.
- **Symptoms:** Cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath.
- **Treatment:** Currently, **there is no specific antiviral therapy** to treat HMPV and **no vaccine** to prevent HMPV.



PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM)

Manastu Space (IIT Bombay startup) successfully tested their green propulsion system VYOM 2U onboard PSLV C60 in space using POEM-4.

- POEM-4 offers triple the capacity of its predecessor, POEM-3.

About POEM

- **Launched by:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
- **Purpose:** To provide a **cost-effective platform** for on-orbit experiments. So far, **Launching proprietary systems** into space has traditionally been **prohibitively expensive** for smaller entities.
- **Working:** Transforms **PSLV's fourth stage into a free-flying space testbed** in low Earth orbit.
- **Strategic importance:** Reduces entry barriers for startups, promotes space technology innovation in India.



Atomic Clock

Quantum-based atomic clock to has been developed in United Kingdom

About Atomic clock

- Atomic clock, type of clock that uses certain **resonance frequencies** of atoms (usually cesium or rubidium) to keep time with extreme accuracy.
 - ⊕ It is claimed that **Quantum-based atomic clock** will lose less than one second over billions of years, allowing scientists to measure time at an unprecedented scale.

Benefits of Quantum-based atomic clock:

- Increasing accuracy of **Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)**,
- Enhance the accuracy of **advanced weapon systems**, like guided missiles etc.



Island Development Agency (IDA)

The Union Home Minister chaired the 7th meeting of the Island Development Agency (IDA).

About IDA

- **Genesis:** Set up in 2017
- **Aim:** To promote holistic development of Islands
 - ⊕ IDA reviews the progress of different developmental projects.

Personality in news



Rani Velu Nachiyar (1730 –1796)

Prime Minister paid tribute to Rani Velu Nachiyar on her birth anniversary.

Rani Velu Nachiyar

She was princess of **Ramanathapuram** (Tamil Nadu) and child of ruler of **Ramnad kingdom**.

- Known by Tamils as **Veeramangai**.
- Reinherited **Sivagangai kingdom** of her husband.
- She was **proficient in languages** like French, English, and Urdu.

Contributions

- **Was first queen** to have ever actively opposed the British rule.
- In collaboration with **Hyder Ali and Gopala Nayaker**, waged war against British.
- Went on to **produce first human bomb** and established first army of trained women soldiers.

Values: Bravery, leadership, etc.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI