

# NEWS TODAY

## MELTING GLACIERS DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE CAUSED EARTH'S AXIS TO SHIFT SINCE MID-90s: STUDY

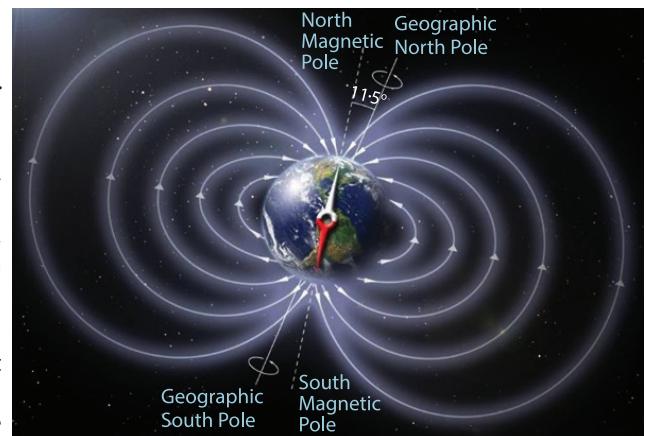
- Earth's axis is the line along which it spins around itself as it revolves around the Sun.

➤ The points on which the axis intersects the planet's surface are the **geographical north and south poles**.  
 ➤ The location of the poles is not fixed. Thus, the **poles move when the axis moves**, and the movement is called "polar motion".  
 ➤ Generally, polar motion is caused by changes in the hydrosphere, atmosphere, oceans, or solid Earth. But now, **climate change is adding to the degree with which the geographical poles wander**.

- According to the new study

➤ Since the 1990s, climate change has caused billions of tonnes of glacial ice to melt into oceans. This has caused the **Earth's poles to move in new directions**.  
 ➤ **The north pole has shifted in a new eastward direction** since the 1990s, because of changes in the hydrosphere.  
 ➤ While this **change is not expected to affect daily life**, it can change the length of the day by a few milliseconds.

- Polar Motion is **different from Polar wandering** where **magnetic poles** over Earth's surface wander through geologic time.



## CENTRE RELEASES ₹8873 CRORE FOR STATE DISASTER RESPONSE FUND (SDRF)

- This is the **first instalment of the central share of SDRF** for the year 2021-22, released ahead of the normal schedule.

➤ Centre said that states can use up to **50% of amount for COVID-19 containment measures**.  
 ➤ It can be **utilised to meet the cost of oxygen generation**, ventilators, etc.  
 • Under **Disaster Management Act 2005**, National Disaster Response Fund at national level and SDRF at state level were created **to meet the rescue and relief expenditure during any notified disaster**.  
 ➤ In 2018, **Central Government enhanced its contribution to 90% and all States will contribute 10 % to SDRF**.  
   ➤ It is **released in two equal instalments as per Finance Commission recommendation**.  
   ➤ SDRF shall be used only for **providing immediate relief to the victims**.

- **Disasters covered under SDRF:** Cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, etc.

➤ Last year, Ministry of Home Affairs had decided to treat **COVID-19 as a notified disaster** for purpose of providing assistance under SDRF.  
 ➤ Also, **state government may use up to 10% of funds** for local **disasters** which is not included in notified list.

## FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS

- In the recent weeks, there have been fire incidents in hospitals at various locations in India.

➤ National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) says 330 people died in commercial building fires in 2019.

- While **electrical faults are cited as the leading cause of fires**, State governments are also lax with building safety laws, inspections and equipping public buildings with modern technology.

- Mechanisms to deal with fire safety

➤ Fire service is a **state subject** and has been included as a **municipal function in the XII schedule** of the Constitution under Article 243-W.

➤ Part 4 of **National Building Code (NBC) of India** deals with **specifications and guidelines for design and materials that reduce the threat of destructive fires**.

➤ **National Disaster Management Authority** has stipulated requirements for fire safety in public buildings, including hospitals.

➤ Last year, Supreme Court directed all States to carry out fire safety audits of dedicated **COVID-19 hospitals**.

➤ States and UTs have been directed to update their respective local building Bye-laws and to align with **Model Bill on Maintenance of Fire & Emergency Services 2019**.

## GOVERNMENT TARGETS ROAD CONSTRUCTION WORTH RS.15 LAKH CRORE IN NEXT TWO YEARS

- As strong transport infrastructure is essential to economic growth, a **robust road network will be one important pillar in India's speedy economic recovery**.

- **Challenges** in development of roads

➤ **Higher cost of land compensation**  
 ➤ **A tight liquidity situation** among banks and the Non-Banking Financial Companies.  
 ➤ **Source of funding is limited** to budgetary support from the Central government and borrowings.  
 ➤ Delays and challenges on account of the **Covid-19 pandemic**.

- **Steps taken**

➤ The **2021-22 Budget** set aside an outlay of ₹1,18,101 crore for the road transport and highways sector, in addition to the authorisation to raise Internal and Extra Budgetary Resources of ₹65,000 crore.

➤ National Infrastructure Pipeline also has road transport as a focus area.

➤ The Centre has awarded 4,466 km of highways under the '**Bharatmala Pariyojana**' scheme.

➤ **Bridging the funding gap**  
   ➤ **100% FDI** in the road sector  
   ➤ NHAI's Infrastructure Investment Trust (InViT) will be launched soon.  
   ➤ The newly announced **Development Financial Institution** too may play a major role in making viable debt available for road network development.

India has the second largest roads network (4.9 million km) in the world. India's road network comprises national highways, state highways, district roads, rural roads, urban roads and project roads. This road network transports 64.5% of all goods in the country and 90% of India's total passenger traffic.



# US HINTS AT 'WAY FORWARD' ON TRIPS PROPOSAL MOVED BY INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA IN OCTOBER, 2020

- To ensure equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines and therapeutics around the world, India & South Africa had moved a proposal at the WTO to temporarily waive on intellectual property protection under Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- TRIPS (came into force in 1995) is a multilateral agreement on IPRs like copyright, industrial designs, patents and protection of undisclosed information or trade secrets.
  - It harmonises intellectual property (IP) protection by imposing binding obligations on member countries to ensure a minimum level of protection and enforcement of IP rights in their territories.
  - Critics argue that IP rights, especially those on patents, hinder the introduction of affordable vaccines and drugs in developing countries and deny people their right to health.
- Alternative measures that could be pursued if waiver is denied
  - Voluntary licensing arrangements between pharmaceutical companies and countries that wish to make vaccine doses for their own use.
  - Compulsory licensing, whereby, for the purpose of combating a health emergency a WTO member is allowed to override a patent and 'license' a domestic manufacturer to produce a global vaccine for its own domestic use.

## ALSO IN NEWS

Article 311 (2) of the Indian Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A J&amp;K government teacher was terminated from his services without holding any inquiry.</li><li>• Article 311 (2) mandates prior inquiry before dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of government employees.</li><li>• However, Article 311 (2) (C) no prior inquiry is required if the President or the Governor is satisfied that in the interest of the security of the State, it is not expedient to hold such an inquiry.</li></ul>
Special 301 Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report is the result of an annual review of the state of intellectual property (IP) protection and enforcement in U.S. trading partners around the World.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ This year, India and eight other countries were placed in the Priority Watch List for IP protection and enforcement.</li><li>➢ Last year too, India was categorised under same list.</li><li>➢ It said, over the past year, India has remained inconsistent in its progress on IP protection and enforcement.</li></ul></li></ul>
Consumer Confidence Survey (CCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is conducted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)</li><li>• CCS seeks qualitative responses from households, regarding their sentiments on the general economic situation, employment scenario, price level, households' income and spending which provides useful inputs for monetary policy.</li></ul>
P-8I patrol aircraft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recently, US Approved Proposed Sale Of Six P-8I Patrol Aircraft To India. P-8I is a long-range, multimission maritime patrol aircraft offered by Boeing for the Indian Navy.</li><li>• P-8I replaced the ageing fleet of the Indian Navy's Tupolev Tu-142 aircraft.</li><li>• It was designed to protect the vast coastline and territorial waters of India.</li><li>• It can conduct anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (AsuW), intelligence, maritime patrol, and surveillance and reconnaissance missions.</li></ul>
Vitamin C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vitamin C is a vital nutrient for health.</li><li>• Benefits of vitamin C<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ As an antioxidant, it helps remove unwanted substances known as reactive oxidative species (ROS) from the body.</li><li>➢ It helps the body absorb iron.</li><li>➢ It boosts the immune system.</li><li>➢ It enhances wound healing.</li><li>➢ It helps the body produce collagen, L-carnitine, and some neurotransmitters.</li></ul></li><li>• Source: citrus fruit, such as oranges and orange juice, peppers, strawberries, broccoli, brussels sprouts, potatoes etc.</li><li>• Persistent lack of vitamin C in one's diet can lead to a condition called scurvy.</li></ul>
Putola Nach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recently, in collaboration with UNICEF an Assam based Trust has produced three short videos using Putola Nach for creating mass awareness on COVID appropriate behaviour.</li><li>• Putola Nach is the string puppetry of Assam. It is performed in three areas with distinct characteristics.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ Lower Assam: Putala-Bhoariya and Putala-Bhaona.</li><li>➢ Upper Assam (Majuli island): In the style of the Ankia Nat form developed by Sankaradev.</li><li>➢ North Assam: borrow largely from the mobile theatre of Assam (Bhraymaman) in terms of themes and costumes.</li></ul></li></ul>
May Day (May 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is International Labour Day dedicated to workers and labourers across the world. This day encourages them to be aware of their rights.</li><li>• In 1889, Marxist International Socialist Congress adopted a resolution for a great international demonstration in which they demanded that workers should not be made to work for more than 8 hours a day. After this, it became an annual event and May 1 was celebrated as Labour Day.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ May Day was first celebrated on May 1, 1890.</li></ul></li></ul>