

Soaring Land Prices, Land Grabs, And Carbon Schemes Creating Unprecedented 'Land Squeeze'

- A report titled 'Land Squeeze' by the **International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food)** highlights severe and growing pressures on global farmland, known as land squeeze.
- **Land Squeeze Dimensions in India:**
 - **Land Degradation and Desertification:** Over 70% of India's arable land is experiencing degradation.
 - **Land Concentration:** The top 10% of landowners hold 45% of the farmland.
 - **Land Fragmentation:** The average agricultural holding in India is just 1.08 hectares (2015-16).
- **Steps Taken to Address Land Inequality in India:**
 - **Land Reforms:** Measures include the abolition of intermediaries, tenancy reforms, imposing limits on land holdings, and land consolidation.
 - **Joint Forest Management Program:** This program aims to improve access to forest resources and reduce land degradation.
 - **Voluntary Group Farming:** In states like Kerala and Telangana, this approach has increased women's access to land, providing livelihoods and empowering them.

'Five-Year Review Of India's Merchandise Trade' Report

- A report by the **Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI)** examines the effects of international disruptions and domestic challenges on trade, along with shifts in market performance. It also looks at how **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)** impact India's global trade dynamics.
- **About FTAs:**
 - FTAs are agreements between countries to reduce or remove trade and investment barriers, aiming to strengthen trade and commercial relationships. They can include trade in goods, services, intellectual property rights (**IPRs**), and more.
- **Key Findings on India's FTAs:**
 - India's imports from FTA partners increased by about **38%**, while exports grew by only about **14.5%**.
 - The FTA with **ASEAN**, signed in **2010**, resulted in imports growing faster than exports.
 - Globally, India ranks **17th** in merchandise exports and 8th in merchandise imports.
- **Issues with India's FTAs:**
 - **Low FTA Utilization:** Only about 25% of India's FTAs are utilized, compared to 70-80% in developed countries.
 - **High Compliance Costs:** Complex certification processes and rules of origin increase compliance costs.
 - **Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs):** Partner countries, like Japan, impose strict standards, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical barriers.
 - **Limited Awareness:** There is inadequate promotion and outreach about FTA benefits among exporters.
- **Key Recommendations by Surjit Bhalla Committee (2019):**
 - **Integrated Approach:** Combine efforts in trade of goods, services, and investment.
 - **Technical Regulations Program:** Implement a comprehensive program using international standards to tackle non-tariff barriers (NTBs).
 - **MSME Support:** Provide institutional support to small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to help them benefit from FTAs, ensuring they comply with international rules.
 - **FTA Utilization Database:** Create a clear database to track how FTAs are being used.
 - **Improved Coordination and Outreach:** Enhance coordination between ministries, conduct outreach programs at the state level, and set up systems for consulting with stakeholders.
 - **Trade Remedies:** Utilize tools like anti-dumping and countervailing duties provided under FTAs to protect domestic industries.

Other Information Need To Know:

- According to the **Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI)**, **China has become India's largest trading partner in the fiscal year 2023-24**, surpassing the **United States**. The trade between India and China reached \$118.4 billion, just slightly more than the \$118.3 billion traded with the US.

World Hydrogen Summit 2024

- India set up its first pavilion at the **World Hydrogen Summit 2024 in Rotterdam, Netherlands, from May 13 – 15, 2024.**
- **Significance of the Summit:** The World Hydrogen Summit is a major event in the global green hydrogen ecosystem, with around 15,000 delegates expected.
- **About National Green Hydrogen Mission:**
 - **Launched In January 2023**
 - **Budget- Rs. 19,744 Crores, allocated as follows:**
 - **Rs. 17,490 crore for the SIGHT program**
 - **Rs. 1,466 crore for pilot projects**
 - **Rs. 400 crore for R&D**
 - **Rs. 388 crore for other components**
 - **Aim- 5 MMT Of Green Hydrogen Production Capacity By 2030.**
 - **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**
- **Current Projects:** Tenders awarded for 412,000 tonnes of green hydrogen production capacity and 1,500 MW of electrolyzer manufacturing capacity.
- **Dedicated Portal:** A portal for the National Green Hydrogen Mission has been launched for comprehensive information on the mission and its progress: **National Green Hydrogen Mission Portal.**
- **Strategic Programs Under The Mission:**
 - **SIGHT Program:** Financial incentives for domestic manufacturing of electrolyzers and green hydrogen production.
 - **Pilot Projects:** Support for new end-use sectors and production pathways.
 - **Green Hydrogen Hubs:** Identification and development of regions for large-scale hydrogen production and utilization.

WPI Inflation Hits 13-Month High

- In April 2024, WPI inflation reached 1.26%, the highest in 13 months.
- **About WPI:**
 - **Purpose:** Measures the average change in prices of commodities sold in bulk at the early transaction stages.
 - **Base Year:** 2011-2012.
 - **Released By:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Components:**
 - **Primary Articles:** 22.62%
 - **Fuel and Power:** 13.15%
 - **Manufactured Products:** 64.23% (largest component)
- **Coverage:** Does not include services.
- **Food Weightage:** Food accounts for about 24% of the WPI, which is less than its weightage in the CPI.

Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)

- The **US State Department warned India** of possible sanctions under the **Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)** after the India-Iran deal on the **Chabahar port.**
- **About CAATSA:**
 - **Purpose:** A US federal law enacted in 2017 to impose economic sanctions on countries with significant engagements with Russia, North Korea, and Iran.
 - **Penalties:** Includes economic and financial penalties for nations engaging in substantial transactions with Russian intelligence and military.
 - **Exemption for India:** In 2018, the US House of Representatives passed an amendment to exempt India from CAATSA sanctions for purchasing the S-400 missile defense system from Russia.

Indian Literary Masterpieces Added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

- India has achieved a significant milestone as three of its literary gems – **the Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra, and Sahṛdayāloka-Locana** – **have been included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register.** This recognition honors India's profound literary heritage and cultural legacy, highlighting the enduring wisdom and artistic brilliance that have played a vital role in shaping the nation's identity.