

SOP for Green Tug Transition Program (GTTP)

- The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways introduced the **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for the **Green Tug Transition Program (GTTP)**. This initiative is aimed at moving from conventional fuel-based harbor tugs to more eco-friendly alternatives, promoting green shipping.
- **A tug is a type** of boat that assists large ships in entering or leaving a port.
- **About GTTP:** GTTP, announced in 2023, is a significant part of the 'Panch Karma Sankalp,' which aims to replace traditional fuel-based harbor tugs at India's major ports with green tugs. The 'Panch Karma Sankalp' includes five major initiatives, such as 30% financial support for promoting green shipping and a Single Window Portal for monitoring and facilitating river and sea cruises.
- **Why Green Shipping is Important:** The shipping sector is responsible for nearly 3% of global CO2 emissions. In India, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from maritime activities (excluding military operations) contribute to 1% of the total GHG emissions from the transport sector.
- **Challenges in Decarbonizing Shipping:**
 - **Reliance on Fossil Fuels:** Around 99% of the international shipping sector's energy needs are met by fossil fuels.
 - **High Transition Costs:** For example, switching to LNG fuel requires significant modifications to existing infrastructure, as LNG needs to be stored at cryogenic temperatures.
 - **Other Challenges:** Inadequate port facilities lead to inefficient route planning and fuel use. Additionally, enforcing regulations in international waters is difficult, among other issues.

Satellite-Based Agriculture Decision Support System Launched

- The Union Minister of State for Agriculture introduced the **Krishi-Decision Support System (Krishi-DSS)**, a geo-spatial platform designed to provide real-time information on crop conditions, weather patterns, water resources, and soil health.
- This system was developed by the **Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**, in collaboration with the Department of Space, using data from **RISAT-1A** and the **Visualization of Earth Observation Data and Archival System (VEDAS)**.
- **Applications of Space Technology in Agriculture:**

<u>Technology</u>	<u>Applications</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Remote Sensing and Imagery	- Early detection of pests and diseases - Land use mapping	- Minimizes potential crop loss - Helps identify suitable land for agriculture and optimize land use
Global Positioning System (GPS)	- Precision farming through accurate mapping of fields and resource allocation - Livestock tracking (e.g., monitoring grazing patterns)	- Reduces resource use and costs - Creates digital field maps for better planning
Communication Technologies	- Real-time data sharing	- Allows farmers to access current market prices, weather forecasts, and agricultural advisories
Weather Forecasting and Climate Modeling	- Early warning systems - Monitoring climate change impact	- Helps reduce the effects of extreme weather and natural disasters

Initiatives Implemented:

- **FASAL (Forecasting Agricultural Output using Space, Agro-Meteorology, and Land Observations) Project:** Utilizes space technology to forecast agricultural production.
- **CHAMAN (Coordinated Program on Horticulture Assessment and Management using Geoinformatics) Project:** Focuses on the assessment and management of horticultural crops using geospatial technology.
- **KISAN (Crop Insurance using Space Technology and Geoinformatics):** Enhances accuracy in yield estimation to improve crop insurance processes.

Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) (Fourth Amendment) Rules, 2024

➤ The Union Ministry of Finance has notified new rules under the **Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999**, in line with the **Union Budget 2024-25**, to simplify regulations for **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** and Overseas Investment.

➤ Key Highlights of the Amended Rules:

- **Cross-Border Share Swaps:** The new rules simplify the process of cross-border share swaps, allowing Indian companies to issue or transfer equity instruments in exchange for equity instruments of foreign companies. This aims to support the global expansion of Indian businesses through mergers, acquisitions, and other strategic initiatives, enabling them to enter new markets and strengthen their global presence.
- **FDI in White Label ATMs:** The amendment permits **100% FDI** through the **Automatic Route in White Label ATMs**, which are ATMs established, owned, and operated by non-banking entities. This move is intended to enhance financial inclusion across the country.
- **Definition of 'Startup Company':** The definition of a 'Startup Company' has been aligned with the **2019** notification issued by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**. According to this definition, an entity will be recognized as a startup if:
 - It has been incorporated or registered as a private limited company (**under the Companies Act, 2013**), a partnership firm (**under the Partnership Act, 1932**), or a limited liability partnership, and is within 10 years from the date of incorporation/registration.
 - Its turnover has not exceeded **₹100 crore** in any financial year since its incorporation/registration.

Tightened Regulations for NBFC-P2P Lending Platforms by RBI

➤ The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has issued a master circular to enforce stricter norms for **Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)** operating **Peer-to-Peer (P2P) lending platforms**.

➤ What is P2P Lending?

- P2P lending allows individuals to lend and borrow money directly through online platforms, bypassing traditional financial institutions like banks.

➤ Key Regulations:

- NBFC-P2P platforms are required to function solely as intermediaries, connecting lenders and borrowers.
- A cap has been set on the total amount a lender can lend across all P2P platforms, limiting it to **₹50,00,000**.
- P2P platforms are forbidden from promoting P2P lending as an investment product or engaging in the cross-selling of insurance products.

India Hosts 3rd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS)

➤ The **3rd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS)** aimed to unite countries from the Global South to discuss a wide range of issues under the principle of "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" (**The World is One Family**).

➤ **Understanding Global South:** The term "Global South" refers to nations often categorized as "developing," "less developed," or "underdeveloped," as opposed to the "Global North," which consists of wealthier nations. The two are divided by the Brandt Line.

➤ **Previous Summits:** India previously hosted the 1st and 2nd VOGSS in January and November of 2023.

➤ Key Highlights of the 3rd VOGSS:

- **Theme:** "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future."
- **Virtual Participation:** The summit saw virtual participation from 123 countries (China and Pakistan were not invited).
- **Global Development Compact (GDC):** India proposed the GDC in response to concerns about nations burdened by debt under the guise of development finance. The compact will emphasize trade for development, sustainable growth, technology sharing, and more.
- **Financial Initiatives:** India will launch a special fund of \$2.5 million to support trade promotion activities and establish a Trade Policy Training Fund of \$1 million for capacity building.

➤ Challenges Faced by the Global South:

- Outdated global governance and financial institutions.
- A significant technological divide between the Global North and South.
- Ongoing threats from terrorism, extremism, and separatism

Agni Missile

- **Shri R.N. Agarwal**, known as the father of the Agni missile and a recipient of the **Padma Bhushan**, has recently passed away. He was the **Agni program director** and also led the Advanced Systems Laboratory in Hyderabad.
- **About the Agni Missile:**
 - The Agni missile was developed under **DRDO's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme**.
 - These are surface-to-surface ballistic missiles powered by solid propellant.
 - They play a crucial role in India's nuclear launch capabilities and have ranges varying from medium to intercontinental. The latest in the series is Agni Prime, with other variants including Agni 1-5.

Serosurvey

- The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has been carrying out **serosurveys** since last year to assess the exposure to **Mpox among India's high-risk groups**.
- **About Serosurvey:**
 - A serosurvey involves collecting and testing blood samples (or alternative specimens like oral fluid) from a specific group of people over a set period of time.
 - **Objective:** The goal is to measure the presence of IgG antibodies against a particular pathogen, which helps to identify if individuals have been exposed to that pathogen.
 - **Significance :** Serosurveys help determine the prevalence of infection, identify immunity gaps, and provide key data for infectious disease modeling and other public health strategies.

Gross Environment Product Index (GEPI)

- **Uttarakhand** has become the first Indian state to introduce a **Gross Environment Product Index (GEPI)**.
- **About GEPI:** GEPI is a new approach to measure ecological changes due to human activities.
- **Four Pillars of GEPI:** Air, Soil, Trees, Water
- **Formula:** $GEP\ Index = (Air-GEP\ Index + Water-GEP\ Index + Soil-GEP\ Index + Forest-GEP\ Index)$
- **Significance:**
 - GEPI helps evaluate the impact of human activities on ecosystems and natural resources. It also measures how much we restore or contribute back to the environment and highlights the role natural ecosystems play in supporting the economy and overall well-being.

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

- **Dahisar and Kandivali** in Mumbai have been included in the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.
- **About Amrit Bharat Station Scheme:** The scheme is led by the Ministry of Railways, Launched in 2023.
- **Objectives:** The goal is to develop and upgrade railway stations with modern amenities for passengers. It aims to revamp a total of 1,275 stations.
- **Key Features:**
 - The scheme includes long-term planning to improve station accessibility, provide free Wi-Fi, and promote initiatives like 'One Station One Product.'
 - It also focuses on seamless multi-modal connectivity, transforming stations into city centers, boosting the local economy, and promoting transit-oriented development.

ISRO launches Earth Observation Satellite EOS-08

- ISRO has launched the **Earth Observation Satellite, EOS-08**, as part of the SSLV-D3/EOS-08 mission. It was launched by the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)-D3 from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota**.
- **Mission Details:**
 - The satellite will operate in a circular Low Earth Orbit at an altitude of 475 km with an inclination of 37.4°, and it has a mission life of **1 year**. The mission also included SR-0 DEMOSAT, developed by **Space Kidz India**.
- **Objectives of the EOS-08 Mission:**
 - Design and build a microsatellite.
 - Develop payload instruments that are compatible with the microsatellite platform.
 - Introduce new technologies for future operational satellites.