

Quality Council of India Introduces QCI Surajya Recognition & Ranking Framework

- The **Framework aims** to recognize and reward states and organizations that excel in quality and innovation, contributing to a developed India. **It focuses on four key pillars:**
 - **Shiksha (Education)**
 - **Swasthya (Health)**
 - **Samriddhi (Prosperity)**
 - **Sushasan (Governance)**
- **About QCI**
 - **The Quality Council of India (QCI)** was established in **1996** as the national body for accreditation.
 - It is an autonomous, non-profit organization under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, based on recommendations from the Expert Mission of the European Union.
 - QCI was set up jointly by the Government of India and Indian industry associations (ASSOCHAM, FICCI, CII).
 - **Nodal Department:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
 - **Governing Council:** Comprises 39 members, including the Chairperson and Secretary General, with equal representation from the government, industry, and other stakeholders. The Chairperson is nominated by the Prime Minister.
- **Role of QCI**
 - **National Accreditation Body (NAB):** Promotes quality through the National Quality Campaign in line with global standards.
 - **Third-Party Assessment:** Creates a mechanism for the third-party assessment of products, services, and processes.
 - **Improving Quality of Life:** Aims to enhance the quality of life and well-being of Indian citizens.

CSE Report Finds Dangerous Increase In Ozone Pollution Across Urban India

- The report, **Air Quality Tracker: An invisible** threat, was released **August 6, 2024** by Delhi-based think tank **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)**.
- **The Report has revealed a disturbing trend:** Ground-level ozone pollution is on the rise across India's major cities.
- **This invisible gas**, unlike the more familiar fine particulate matter, also known as PM2.5, poses a serious health threat, particularly to those with respiratory problems.
- The researchers tracked trends from **April 1 to July 18, covering the years 2020 to 2024**
- **Key Findings on Ground-level Ozone (GLO)**
 - India's **10 metropolitan** areas have exceeded the national ozone standard, with Delhi being the most affected.
 - **GLO Hotspots:** Found in areas with low levels of NO₂ and PM_{2.5} since the lack of NO₂ hampers its dissipation.
 - **Night-time GLO:** Continues to persist in all metropolitan areas.
- **Ground-level Ozone (GLO)**
 - Ozone (O₃) is a variant of oxygen composed of three oxygen atoms. It occurs both in the Earth's upper atmosphere and at ground level (tropospheric ozone).
 - **Formation:** GLO is a secondary, short-lived pollutant formed by the reaction between oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight. Peak O₃ levels occur in summers.
 - **Sources:** Pollution from cars, power plants, industries, and electronic equipment (e.g., photocopiers).
- **Impact of Ground-level Ozone (GLO)**
 - **Health:** Can worsen bronchitis, trigger asthma, and permanently damage lung tissue.
 - **Climate:** Acts as a strong greenhouse gas by absorbing radiation.
 - **Agriculture and Ecosystems:** Interferes with photosynthesis and stunts the growth of some plant species.
- **Strategies to Prevent Ozone Pollution**
 - **Reduce Methane:** Lower methane emissions.
 - **Cut Atmospheric Pollution:** Reduce pollution from cars, power plants, and other sources.

RBI Asks Banks To Provide Short Term Crop Loans To Farmers

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has directed banks to offer short-term crop loans and loans for allied activities such as animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries, and beekeeping.
- These loans, up to a limit of **₹3 lakh**, should be provided to farmers at an interest rate of **7%**.
 - **Interest Subvention Rate:** Lending institutions will receive an interest subvention of 1.5% for the financial year 2024-25.
 - **Timely Repayment Benefit:** Farmers who repay their loans on time will receive an additional interest subvention of 3%.
 - **Aadhaar Linkage:** Linking Aadhaar is mandatory for availing these short-term loans.
- To prevent farmers from selling their produce at low prices due to financial distress and to encourage storage in warehouses, the interest subvention benefit under **the Kisan Credit Card scheme** will be extended to **small and marginal farmers for up to six months post-harvest**.

Kasturi Cotton Bharat Brand

- The **Ministry of Textiles** has empowered all cotton ginners in India to produce the **Kasturi Cotton Bharat brand**.
- This premium quality cotton is distinguished by its 100% traceability and certification, achieved through blockchain technology.
- **About Kasturi Cotton Bharat**
 - **Initiative:** A joint effort by the **Ministry of Textiles**, Cotton Corporation of India, trade bodies, and the industry.
 - **Objective:** The initiative aims to enhance the global competitiveness of Indian cotton and create a sustainable ecosystem. It operates on the principle of self-regulation, ensuring complete responsibility for branding, traceability, and certification.
 - **Implementing Agency:** Cotton **Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL)**.

NHAI's Loan Pre-Payment with InvIT Proceeds

- The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** recently repaid a **Rs. 15,700 crore** loan using proceeds from its **Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) monetization**.
- **About InvITs**
 - InvITs are collective investment schemes, similar to mutual funds, that allow individual and institutional investors to invest in infrastructure projects and earn returns from the income generated.
 - **Regulation:** They are regulated by the **SEBI (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014**.
 - **Taxation:** Dividend and interest income from InvITs are fully taxable according to the investor's tax slab rate.
 - **Classification:** InvITs are classified as borrowers under the SARFAESI Act.
- The proceeds from InvIT monetization are exclusively used for repaying NHAI's debt

Anemia Mukh Bharat (AMB)

- The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** recently detailed the **Anemia Mukh Bharat (AMB) initiative**.
- **About AMB**
 - **Objective:** To reduce anemia among vulnerable groups, including women and children.
 - **Launch:** Part of the POSHAN Abhiyaan, initiated in 2018.
 - **Strategy:** Follows a 6X6X6 approach:
 - **Six Target Beneficiaries:** Different vulnerable groups.
 - **Six Interventions:** Specific measures to combat anemia.
 - **Six Institutional Mechanisms:** Structures to implement and monitor the initiative.
- **Interventions**
 1. **Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation:** Regular supplements for those at risk.
 2. **Delayed Cord Clamping:** Clamping the umbilical cord three minutes after delivery in health facilities.
 3. **Addressing Non-Nutritional Causes:** Focusing on issues like malaria, haemoglobinopathies, and fluorosis in high-risk areas.
 4. **Biannual Deworming:** Mass deworming campaigns for children aged 1-19 years.