

WORLD COMPETITIVENESS INDEX

Recently, the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) published the World Competitiveness Index.



About the World Competitiveness Index:

- The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY), was first published in 1989.
- It is a comprehensive annual report and worldwide reference point on the competitiveness of countries.
- It analyses and ranks countries according to how they manage their competencies to achieve long-term value creation.
- It is based on 336 competitiveness criteria and four factors, namely **Economic performance, Government efficiency, Business efficiency, and Infrastructure.**

Key Points of the Index

- **Denmark, Ireland, and Switzerland** have been named the top three among 64 economies measured for their global competitiveness.
- **India** fell three rungs to **finish 40th** but is still in a better position than it was between 2019-2021 when it was placed 43rd three years in a row.
- India improved in government efficiency but fared slightly poorer than other countries in business efficiency, infrastructure, and economic performance.
- Specifically, the top three measures that helped India in its score are exchange rate **stability, compensation levels, and improvements in pollution control.**

NANDI PORTAL

Recently, the Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying launched Nandi - NOC Approval for New Drug and Inoculation System portal, at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.

About the NANDI Portal:



- It is developed by the **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD)** in collaboration with the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)** through the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).

• **Significance of the portal**

- It will streamline **the regulatory approval process** for veterinary products.
- It will enhance transparency and efficiency in assessing and examining proposals for veterinary drugs and vaccines.
- It will be more streamlined through seamless integration with the **SUGAM portal** of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization.
- It will promote the well-being of livestock and the livestock industry.
- It will bring about growth and innovation by enabling **quick and easy coordination** between various Government departments and institutes.

Key Facts about Central Drugs Standard Control Organization

- It is the **National Regulatory Authority (NRA)** of India for the medical devices industry under the provisions of the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules.
- It works under the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**.
- Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) is the head of the CDSCO.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.

Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, CDSCO is responsible for,

- Approval of New Drugs;
- Conduct Clinical Trials;
- Laying down the standards for Drugs;
- Control over the quality of imported Drugs in the country;

EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION (EPFO)

Recently, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has extended the deadline for members and pensioners to apply for higher Provident Fund (PF) pensions till July 11.



About Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)

- It is a **statutory body** that came into existence under the **Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, of 1952**.
- The Act and Schemes framed there under are administered by a **tripartite Board** known as the Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund, consisting of representatives of **Government (Both Central and State), Employers, and Employees**.
- The Board administers a contributory provident fund, a pension scheme, and an insurance scheme for the workforce engaged in the organized sector in India.
- It is one of the world's largest organizations in terms of clientele and the volume of financial transactions undertaken by it.
- The Board is assisted by the Employees' PF Organization (EPFO), consisting of offices at 122 locations across the country.
- The EPFO is under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India**.
- The Board operates three schemes, namely:
 - The Employees' **Provident Funds Scheme 1952 (EPF) and its features**
 - Accumulation plus interest upon retirement and death.
 - Partial withdrawals allowed for education, marriage, illness, and house construction.
 - Housing scheme for EPFO members to achieve the Prime Minister's vision of Housing for all by 2022.
 - The Employees' **Pension Scheme 1995 (EPS) and its features**
 - The monthly benefit for superannuation/benefit, disability, survivor, widow(er), and children.
 - Minimum pension of disablement.
 - Past service benefit to participants of the erstwhile Family Pension Scheme, 1971.
- The **Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme 1976 (EDLI)**

- The benefit is provided in **case of the death of** an employee who was a member of the scheme at the time of death.
 - The benefit amount is 20 times the wages, a maximum benefit of 6 Lakh.
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WHAT IS GREENWASHING?

The International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) recently released a new set of G20-backed global rules aimed at helping regulators crack down on greenwashing.



About Greenwashing:

- **What is it?** It is the process of **conveying a false impression** or misleading information about how a company's products are environmentally sound.
- Greenwashing **involves making an unsubstantiated claim to deceive consumers into believing that a company's products are environmentally friendly** or have a greater positive environmental impact than they actually do.
- In addition, greenwashing may occur when a company **attempts to emphasize sustainable aspects of a product to overshadow** its involvement in **environmentally damaging practices**.
- Companies can also greenwash initiatives with **vague claims that don't provide real data or scientific validation for the claims**.
- **For example**, a car vendor claims that a vehicle is eco-friendly because it is more fuel-efficient, while failing to mention or consider the larger industrial impact of vehicle manufacturing on the environment.

What is the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)?

- It was created in 2021-22 to **develop a worldwide standard for sustainability reporting**.
 - It is **part of the independent International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)** foundation, which also writes accounting rules used in more than 100 countries.
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- The mission of the ISSB is to develop—in the public interest—a comprehensive global baseline of high-quality sustainability disclosure standards to meet investors’ information needs.
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WHAT ARE FLASH FLOODS, WHICH HAVE ALSO LED TO LANDSLIDES IN PARTS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH AND HARYANA?

Why in news?

- The Chandigarh-Manali highway was blocked on June 26 following flash floods and landslides.
- Flash floods were witnessed in Khotinallah near Aut (in HP) on the Pandoh–Kullu stretch due to a heavy downpour.

About

- Flash floods are sudden and rapid floods that occur within a short period, typically within hours of heavy rainfall or other intense water accumulation events.
- According to the US’s meteorological agency, the National Weather Service, flash floods are caused when rainfall creates flooding in less than 6 hours.
- They are characterized by a swift rise in water levels in rivers, streams, or urban areas, often with little to no warning.

Factors responsible

- Apart from heavy rain, flash floods can also be caused by dam or levee failures, ice or debris jams, or sudden release of water from natural reservoirs such as glacial lakes.
- In India, flash floods are often associated with cloudbursts – sudden, intense rainfall in a short period of time.
- Factors such as the intensity and duration of rainfall, the steepness of terrain, the nature of the soil, and the presence of man-made structures that impede water flow are also responsible for flash floods.

Features

- Flash floods are known for their extreme force and velocity, carrying a tremendous amount of water, debris, and sediment.

- They can overwhelm drainage systems, cause rivers to overflow their banks, and inundate low-lying areas.
- Flash flooding commonly happens more where rivers are narrow and steep, so they flow more quickly.
- They can occur in urban areas located near small rivers, since hard surfaces such as roads and concrete do not allow the water to absorb into the ground.

How common are flash floods and floods?

• Floods

- According to government data from a project by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority, India is the worst flood-affected country in the world, after Bangladesh.
- It accounts for one-fifth of the global death count due to floods.
- Nearly 75 per cent of the total Indian rainfall is concentrated over a short monsoon season of four months (June to September).
 - As a result, the rivers witness a heavy discharge during these months.
- About 40 million hectares of land in the country are liable to floods according to the National Flood Commission, and an average of 18.6 million hectares of land are affected annually.

• Flash floods

- Flash floods have been commonly witnessed in cities like Chennai and Mumbai.
- Depression and cyclonic storms in the coastal areas of Orissa, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and others also cause flash floods.
- As per the experts, flash floods may in the future, begin to take place after wildfires that have been taking place more frequently.
- This is because wildfires destroy forests and other vegetation, which in turn weakens the soil and makes it less permeable for water to seep through.

Ways to deal with flash floods

- Early warning systems, including weather monitoring, river gauges, and emergency alerts, play a crucial role in mitigating the impact of flash floods.

- It is essential for individuals and communities in flood-prone areas to be aware of the risks, have emergency plans in place, and follow the guidance provided by local authorities during such events.

Steps taken in India

- IMD has been using Doppler radars, a flash floods forecasting and warning systems to predict the occurrence of flash floods.
- The NDMA also advises the inhabitation of low-lying areas along the rivers, nullah and drains to be regulated by the state governments/State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs)/ District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) as a preventive measure.
- Central Water Commission (CWC)/ National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA)/ state governments/ SDMAs also check for landslides and blockages in rivers with the help of satellite imageries.

DIGITAL PUBLISHER CONTENT GRIEVANCES COUNCIL (DPCGC)

The Digital Publisher Content Grievances Council (DPCGC) recently recommended punitive action on an OTT platform, invoking the Information Technology Rules (2021).



About the Digital Publisher Content Grievances Council (DPCGC):

- It is an independent self-regulatory body for Online Curated Content (OCC) providers.
- It was set up under the aegis of Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).
- DPCGC has been recognised and registered by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting as Level II Self-Regulatory Body for publishers of OCC providers, under Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- The DPCGC has an Online Curated Content Publishers (OCCP) Council composed of publishers of OCC as members and an independent Grievance Redressal Board [GRB] consisting of a chairperson and six members.

- The **GRB** will be chaired by a retired Supreme Court/High Court judge, and the members will comprise eminent persons from the media and entertainment industry and experts from various fields, including child rights, minority rights, and media law.

Functions of GRB:

- It will oversee and ensure the alignment and adherence to the Code of Ethics by the OCCP Council members.
- Provide guidance to entities on the Code of Ethics.
- Address grievances that have not been resolved by the publisher within 15 days.
- Hear grievances/appeals filed by complainants.
- DPCGC, through the GRB aims to usher in a redressal mechanism which will ensure a balance between addressing viewer complaints and showcasing content in free-speech environment without ad-hoc interventions

What is Online Curated Content (OCC) Platforms?

- OCC Platforms are companies that carry on the business which curates and presents a wide variety of content by means of online video-on-demand platforms.
- Amazon Prime, Netflix, Hotstar, Zee5, etc, are examples of OOC Platforms operating in India.
- These platforms operate on the basis of a “pull model”, whereby customers have the choice of viewing content as per their own convenience.

[UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS \(UNOOSA\)](#)

The UN Secretary-General recently appointed Indian-origin satellite industry expert Aarti Holla-Maini as Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).



About the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA):

- It is the UN office responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

- It forms **part of the United Nations Office at Vienna** and serves as the **Secretariat for the UN General Assembly's only committee** dealing exclusively with those issues: **the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.**

Functions:

- UNOOSA implements **the United Nations Programme on Space Applications (PSA)**. Under the Programme, UNOOSA conducts training courses, workshops, seminars and other activities on space applications.
 - On behalf of the UN Secretary-General, **UNOOSA maintains the Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space** and **disseminates via its website** that information recorded in the Register.
 - It also **prepares and distributes documents, reports, studies and publications on various aspects of space science and technology applications** and international space law.
 - It works to improve the **use of space science and technology** for the economic and **social development of all countries, particularly developing countries.**
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