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National and International News

World Sustainable Development Summit 2024



Context:

- **Annual Flagship Event:** The WSDS is the annual flagship event of The **Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**.
- **Legacy:** Instituted in 2001, the Summit series has a legacy of over two decades, aiming to make ‘**sustainable development**’ a globally shared goal.
- **Global South Focus:** It is the only independently convened international summit on sustainable development and environment, with a focus on the Global South.
- **Objective:** WSDS strives to provide long-term solutions for the benefit of global communities by assembling the world’s most enlightened leaders and thinkers on a single platform.
- **23rd Edition:** WSDS 2024 marks the **23rd edition of the summit.**
- **Theme:** The theme for WSDS 2024 is ‘**Leadership for Sustainable Development and Climate Justice**’.

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

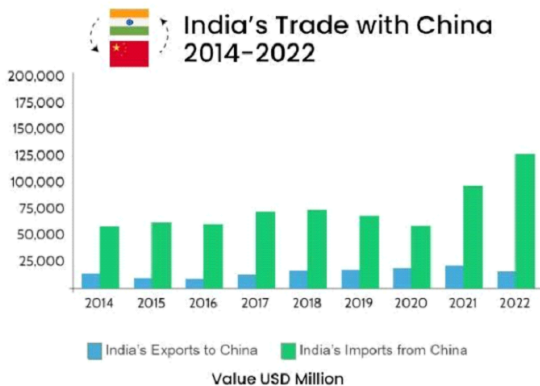
- **Leading Think Tank:** TERI is a leading think tank dedicated to conducting research for the sustainable development of India and the Global South.
- **Multidimensional Organization:** It is an independent, multidimensional organization with capabilities in research, policy, consultancy, and implementation.
- **History:** Established in 1974 as an information center on energy issues, TERI initiated research activities in 1982 with a focus on efficient utilization of energy and sustainable use of natural resources.

Focus Areas:

- Promoting efficient use of resources
- Increasing access to and uptake of sustainable inputs and practices
- Reducing the impact on the environment and climate.
- **Location:** TERI is headquartered in New Delhi.



India - China Bilateral Trade



Context:

- In 2023, India-China bilateral trade surged to a new peak, surpassing the previous year's figures despite a temporary slowdown.
- The Chinese envoy to India, **Ma Jia**, disclosed that trade between the two countries reached **\$136.2 billion**.

Key points:

- Ma Jia revealed that bilateral trade volume in **2023 saw a year-on-year growth of 1.5%**, with India's exports to China also experiencing a notable 6% increase.
- The year 2022 witnessed a significant milestone in bilateral trade, with transactions amounting to **\$135.98 billion**.
- Notably, imports from China exceeded **\$100 billion, marking a 21% increase** despite persistent tensions over the military standoff at the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.

The Healthy Indian Project (THIP) and Vaccine Safety Net (VSN)

Context:

- **The Healthy Indian Project (THIP)** has recently joined the **Vaccine Safety Net (VSN)** established by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- This collaboration aims to provide **reliable vaccine safety information to the Indian population**, aligning with global efforts to ensure accurate immunization details.

Details:

- **THIP is a prominent health information platform in India.**
- This membership highlights THIP's dedication to delivering credible and verified vaccine safety information to the people of India.
- VSN, consisting of **110 websites from 45 countries and offering information in 43 languages**, serves as a global network providing trustworthy vaccine safety information.

Key highlights:

- THIP's inclusion in VSN enhances the credibility of its vaccine safety information.
- Adherence to strict standards and regular evaluations ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of THIP's content.
- Membership in VSN grants THIP access to a broader audience, facilitating the dissemination



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	<p>of accurate vaccine information across diverse populations in India.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THIP, as a VSN member, plays a pivotal role in promoting public health initiatives in India.</li> </ul>
<p><b>US Environmental Protection Efforts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Biden administration introduces <b>stricter standards to combat soot pollution</b>, aiming to reduce fine particle matter emitted from various sources.</li> <li>• The initiative anticipates <b>preventing thousands of premature deaths</b> annually, receiving praise from environmental and public health groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy Details and Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new rule sets a <b>maximum level of 9 micrograms of fine particle pollution per cubic meter of air</b>, down from the previous standard of 12 micrograms.</li> <li>• It imposes air quality targets for states and countries to meet, affecting various sources of pollution such as power plants, vehicles, industries, and wildfires.</li> </ul>

Kerala Regional News

<p><b>14th edition of the International Theatre Festival of Kerala (ITFoK)</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>14th edition of the International Theatre Festival of Kerala (ITFoK)</b> will begin in Kerala on February 9.</li> <li>• <b>Turbulence of war and conflicts and the yearning of the migrants</b> for a place they belong to <b>will be the recurrent themes</b> in the plays</li> <li>• <b>‘Ensemble, Peace and Confidence’ is the theme of the 8-day festival</b> that emphasizes the power of theater to foster understanding and dialogue in a time of global conflict.</li> <li>• It is <b>organized by the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi with the State Culture department.</b></li> <li>• This edition features <b>eight international plays from countries like Brazil, Finland, Italy, Tunisia, Palestine, France, Bangladesh, and Chile.</b></li> </ul>
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<p><b>Kerala writes to Centre again seeking approval for SilverLine project</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerala has written to the central government, reiterating its request for approval of the SilverLine semi-high-speed rail project.</li> <li>• This comes after Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw expressed doubts about the state's commitment to the project.</li> <li>• Kerala cites high occupancy on the newly introduced Vande Bharat trains as evidence for the need for additional high-speed rail connectivity.</li> </ul> <p><b>About:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SilverLine semi-high-speed rail project will create a semi-high-speed rail corridor spanning 529.45 km from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala.</li> <li>• Its aim is to significantly reduce travel time between these endpoints (from 10-12 hours to under 4 hours) and enhance intrastate connectivity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Two alternative alignments being examined for Sabari rail project</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed Sabari rail project in Kerala, aimed at enhancing pilgrim connectivity to the Sabarimala temple, is exploring two alternative alignments due to ongoing challenges with the original plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alignment 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This route takes the railway line directly to the shrine, offering maximum convenience for pilgrims.</li> <li>• However, concerns regarding environmental impact, land acquisition, and potential strain on the temple's infrastructure have been raised.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alignment 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This alignment terminates approximately 25-26 km before the shrine, requiring pilgrims to utilize connecting transportation for the final leg.</li> <li>• While this option reduces environmental and infrastructural concerns, it might raise accessibility issues for some pilgrims, particularly the elderly or those with physical limitations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A green solution for salt stress in rice</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researchers at Sanatana Dharma (SD) College, Alappuzha, have identified a new bacteria from</li> </ul>



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	<p><b>Pokkali rice fields</b> that could <b>help rice plants thrive in the salt-water conditions</b> in the Kuttanad region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study finds that the <b>bacteria make rice plants saline tolerant</b> and <b>significantly enhances germination, growth, and yield</b></li> <li>• The plants treated with <b>Pseudomonas taiwanensis (PK7), growth-promoting rhizobacteria (ST-PGPRs), have yielded 252 kg/hectare (ha.)</b> more than untreated plants under controlled conditions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mathrubhumi festival of letters to begin on February 8</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>5th edition of Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters (MBIFL)</b> will be held from <b>February 8th to 11th, 2024.</b></li> <li>• It will be held at the <b>picturesque Kanakakunnu Palace in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala</b></li> <li>• <b>Actor Mammooty</b> will inaugurate the four-day event.</li> <li>• Writer <b>Sarah Joseph</b> and <b>Egyptian novelist and journalist Mansoura Ez-Eldin</b> will be the <b>chief guests at the inaugural function.</b></li> <li>• <b>Theme 2024 : Exploring Plurality</b></li> <li>• The theme <b>reflects the festival's commitment to fostering dialogue</b> and understanding across cultures, backgrounds, and viewpoints.</li> </ul>

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