

SEPTEMBER

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CRUX 10

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MK Yadav Sir

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TALKS IN MOSCOW NEXT WEEK

Putin, Erdogan meeting amid efforts to repair Black Sea grain deal

Deal allowed supply to parts of Asia, Africa facing hunger

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, SEPTEMBER 1

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin will host Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan for talks next week, the Kremlin announced Friday, just over six weeks after Moscow broke off a deal brokered by Ankara and the UN that allowed Ukrainian grain to reach world markets safely despite the 18-month war.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin and Erdogan would meet Monday in Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi. The announcement ended weeks of speculation about when and where the two leaders might meet next as international efforts continue to patch up the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which got again and other food to parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia where hunger is a growing threat.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres sent Russia a new proposal in hopes of reviving the deal but it didn't satisfy



Vladimir Putin (left) and Recep Tayyip Erdogan. File

Moscow's demands, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said while hosting his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan, for talks in Moscow on Thursday.

Lavrov said he gave the Turkish government a list of actions that the West would have to take in order for Ukraine's Black Sea exports to resume.

Ukraine and Russia are both major global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other commodities that developing nations rely on.

Turkey, together with the United Nations, brokered the deal in July 2022 that allowed Ukraine

to resume shipping foodstuffs from three Black Sea ports.

Under the initiative, ship and cargo inspections were overseen from Turkey, and vessels sailed to and from Ukraine from there. Almost 33,000 tons of grain left Ukraine while the agreement was in effect.

Ankara's role was key. Turkey is one of Russia's main trading partners and a logistical hub for Russia's foreign trade amid Western sanctions. Erdogan calls Putin "my dear friend."

A separate memorandum that Moscow and the UN agreed to at the same time as the Ukraine initiative pledged to help to overcome wartime obstacles to Russian exports of food and fertilizer. Russian officials repeatedly threatened to pull out of the deals and finally did in July, alleging its conditions hadn't been met.

Russia has complained that restrictions on shipping and insurance have hampered its agricultural exports, but it has shipped record amounts of wheat since last year.

Context: Russia's Putin and Turkey's Erdogan set to meet amid efforts to repair Ukraine grain deal.

- The international efforts continue to try to patch up the **Black Sea Grain Initiative**, which sent grain to **parts of Africa, the Middle East** and Asia where hunger is a growing threat.

What is the Black Sea grain deal?

- The Black Sea grain initiative **was negotiated in July 2022 between Turkey, the UN and Russia** as a way of ensuring that Ukraine, one of the **breadbaskets** of the world, could ensure that its grain could leave its southern ports via the Bosphorus.
- The initiative, allows for commercial food and fertiliser (including ammonia) exports from three key Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea – Odesa, Chornomorsk, and Pivdennyi (formerly known as Yuzhny).

Black Sea

- Located** in southeastern Europe, it is a vast inland sea.
- Shares its Borders with six countries:** Ukraine to the north, Russia to the northeast, Georgia to the east, Turkey to the south, Bulgaria to the southwest, and Romania to the west.
- Through the **Bosporus Strait, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles Strait**, it maintains a connection with the **Mediterranean Sea**.
- Its expanse encompasses about **436,000 square kilometers** (168,000 square miles).



Text of the Vice-President's address at the launch of the warship Mahendragiri in Mumbai

Context: Text of the **Vice-President's address at the launch** of the warship Mahendragiri in Mumbai.

- The **launch of Mahendragiri is a significant milestone** in our maritime history. It is the last of the seven warships of the Nilgiri-class stealth frigates built under Project 17A.

Mahendragiri

- It is the **seventh vessel of the Project 17A frigates**, and taking its name from a prominent peak in the Eastern Ghats in Odisha.
- The **Indian Navy initiated** Project 17 Alpha frigates (P-17A) in 2019.
- The **inaugural ship in the P17A series** is named after a historic frigate of the Navy, INS Nilgiri, which derived its name from the Nilgiri Hills.
- The remaining six ships in Project 17A are christened '**Nilgiri**,' '**Himgiri**,' '**Udaygiri**,' '**Dunagiri**,' '**Taragiri**,' and '**Vindhyagiri**.'

What is Project 17A?

- **Launched by:** Indian Navy in 2019
- **Objective:** To build a fleet of stealthy guided missile frigates. These frigates are currently in production by two companies: **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders** (MDL) and **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers** (GRSE).
- These guided missile frigates have been designed with a particular emphasis on stealth.
 - Their construction incorporates radar-absorbent coatings, rendering them difficult to detect, and making it possible for them to approach enemies unnoticed.

Govt. panel to study simultaneous polls to LS, State Assemblies

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Friday said that a committee has been formed under the headship of former President of India Ram Nath Kovind, to look into the feasibility of simultaneous elections to State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha. Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi declared that the committee has been constituted, and that one needed to await its report for any further news on the issue.

While Mr. Joshi declared that the committee had been constituted, no official notification had been forthcoming from the government till late evening. No information was available on other members of the committee or the terms of reference that they would be operating under. Right after news broke of



Ram Nath Kovind

the formation of such a committee, BJP president J.P. Nadda called on Mr. Kovind at his residence in New Delhi.

“Right now, a committee has been constituted. A report of the committee will come out which will discuss its prospects. It will be discussed in public domain and when it will come in Parliament, there will be discussion there too,” Mr. Joshi said.

CONTINUED ON

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OPPOSITION RESPONSE

» **PAGE 11**

Context: The Indian government has constituted a **committee** to look into the ‘One Nation, One Election’ issue and submit a report for a debate in Parliament.

One Nation One Election

- The **current electoral system in the country** conducts separate elections for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies with a five-year gap.
- This happens either when the **Lower House or state government's** term ends or if either of them dissolves prematurely. The terms of state assemblies may not necessarily **align with each other or with that of the Lok Sabha**. Consequently, election operations occur throughout the year.
- It is considered crucial for mitigating the influence of the **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** on developmental projects.
- It is envisioned as a means to reduce election expenses across various tiers.
- In its 2018 draft report, the **Law Commission of India** examined the potential and obstacles associated with simultaneous elections in India.
- The **concept was first introduced by the Election Commission in 1983** and subsequently explored by the Law Commission and NITI Aayog.
- The **One Nation One Election proposal** suggests holding simultaneous elections in all states and the Lok Sabha every five years.
 - This would require restructuring the **Indian election cycle to ensure that state and central** elections happen concurrently.
 - This means that voters would cast their ballots for both the Lok Sabha and state assemblies on the same day, simultaneously, or in a phased manner as needed.

Rashtriya Poshan Maah is a huge campaign for the health of our family: PM

Context: Rashtriya Poshan Maah is a huge campaign for the health of our family: PM

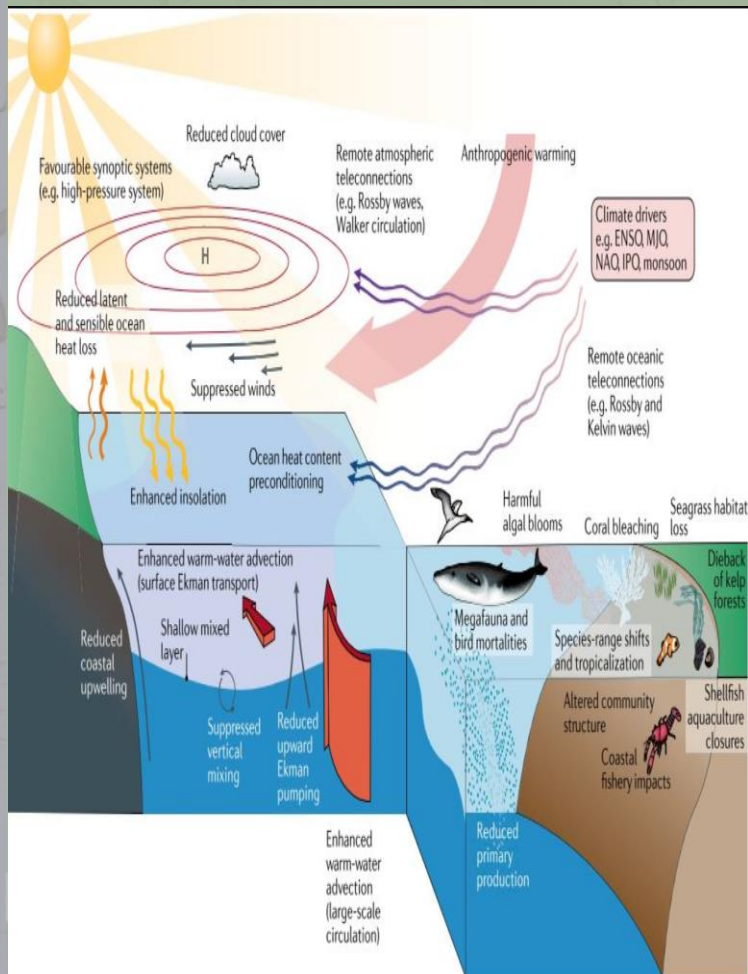
Rashtriya Poshan Maah

- **About:** Rashtriya Poshan Mah is observed as part of the **POSHAN Abhiyan**, which is the **Prime Minister's comprehensive program** for holistic nourishment.
- The first week of September is designated as **Rashtriya Posham Maah**.
- **Aim:** To increase understanding of the significance of nutrition in promoting well-being, fostering growth, and driving economic advancement.
- **Initially Launched:** The American Dietetic Association initiated its launch in 1973 with the aim of educating people about nutrition.
- **India introduced:** The concept of National Nutrition Week in 1982 to promote awareness of nutrition.
- **Initiative:** Women and Child Development Ministry and NITI Aayog

POSHAN Abhiyan

- **Launched:** In 2018
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- **Aim:** To achieve improvement in the **nutritional status of Children (0-6 years)** and **Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM)** in a time-bound manner and ensure the attainment of a malnutrition-free India by 2022
- **Targets:** To reduce **stunting, under-nutrition, and anaemia** (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.

Study finds fish surprisingly resistant to marine heatwaves



Context: Study finds **fish surprisingly** resistant to **marine heatwaves**.

- Some marine heatwaves caused **biomass declines**, but these were exceptions, not the rule, say researchers.
- Prolonged periods of unusually warm ocean** temperatures or marine heatwaves can have devastating effects on marine ecosystems, but the extent of the impact on fish was not known.

Key Points of Study

- Marine heatwaves can lead to **decay and bleaching of sponges and corals**, seabirds dying in large numbers, **waterbodies witnessing harmful** algal blooms, decimation of seaweeds and increased marine mammal strandings.
- The **study relied on data** from long-term scientific trawl surveys of continental shelf **ecosystems in North America and Europe** conducted between 1993 and 2019.
- Although some marine heatwaves caused biomass declines, the researchers said these were the exception rather than the rule.
- Marine **heatwaves can drive local change**.
- The scientists also considered whether marine heatwaves were causing **changes in the composition of fish communities**, looking for losses of species associated with cold water and an **increase in species associated with warm water** (known as “**tropicalisation**”).

Heatwaves: Heatwaves are prolonged periods of abnormally high temperatures relative to the local climate conditions. They typically last for several days or even weeks. IMD recognises it as when the **maximum temperature is 40°C or higher in the plains and 30°C or higher in hilly regions** and the departure from normal temperature is 4.5°C to 6.4°C.

Rohini Commission may call for major shift in OBC quota policy

Sunetra Choudhury

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Even as the results of the first-of-its-kind caste survey are awaited from Bihar, and the Supreme Court continues to hear objections against it, including from the Union government, the latter is mulling over a voluminous report on the reorganisation of the 27% other backward classes (OBC) quota that was submitted to it on August 1.

The contents of the Justice G Rohini Commission's report are strictly under wraps, but HT learns that its recommendations are a major departure from the traditional way in which reservation policy is handled.

The report, which is more than 1,000-pages long, is divided in two parts — the first deals with how the OBC quota should be allocated; and the second is an

Under consideration

The Justice G Rohini Commission's report offers a major departure from the traditional way in which reservation policy is handled. It is divided into two parts

How the OBC quota should be allocated

An updated list of all 2,633 OBC castes across India

'Quantum of benefits'

The sub-categorisation is "on the basis of quantum of benefits enjoyed by different communities" as compared to social status and traditional occupation

Set up in 2017: The commission was created in October 2017 to, among other reasons, ensure the benefits of reservation were not restricted to a few dominant OBCs

updated list of all 2,633 OBC castes across the country.

According to people familiar with the recommendations, the commission has said that "the purpose of sub-categorisation is not to establish a new hierarchy

among OBCs, but to provide a level playing field for all". Indeed, one of the reasons why the commission was set up in October 2017, was to ensure the benefits of reservation were not restricted to a few dominant OBCs. →PII

Context: Rohini Commission may recommend key changes to OBC quota policy.

- **The report**, which is more than 1,000-pages long, is **divided in two parts** -- the first deals with **how the OBC quota should be allocated**; and the **second is an updated list** of all 2,633 OBC castes across the country.

Key Points

- According to people familiar with the recommendations, the commission has said that "**the purpose of sub-categorisation is not to establish** a new hierarchy among OBCs, but to provide a level playing field for all".
- The commission, the people added, has proposed the sub-categorisation of "**the Central List of OBCs primarily on the basis of quantum** of benefits enjoyed by different communities."
- The people, who asked not to be named that the commission has recommended the criteria for this sub-categorisation, going beyond those adopted by earlier commissions like the **Kaka Kalelkar or by the panel headed by BP Mandal**.

Rohini Commission

- **Set up:** In October 2017 under Article 340.
 - **Article 340 grants the President of India** the authority to designate a commission tasked with examining matters related to OBCs and providing suggestions to enhance their circumstances.
- **Aim:** To examine the concentration of reservation and benefits among dominant OBC caste groups.

Demand for Diesel Drops 2.9%, Petrol Sales Rise 0.4% in Aug

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Consumption of diesel dropped 2.9% and that of petrol rose 0.4% in August over last year, according to the state oil companies' data.

The demand for aviation turbine fuel (ATF) rose 9.5% year-on-year in August while that for LPG rose 4.4%.

Compared to August 2019, the ATF sales are still 3.2% lower while those of petrol and diesel are up 21.2% and 8.4% respectively. Over the last few months, state oil companies' petrol and diesel sales have been under pressure from the rising competition from private fuel retailers who had cut

their retail sales last year after government-controlled retailers started selling fuel at below-market rates. Private players

have again boosted their presence in the market this year to benefit from the extraordinarily high margins that fuel retailing currently offers. Rains, industrial activity and the larger state of the economy also influence the sales of transportation fuels.

Sales of petrol have risen 3.4% month-on-month in August while those of diesel have dropped 3.7%. Diesel, which has a wide range of applications from goods transport to mining and farming, accounts for nearly 40% of the country's oil demand.

Fuel Sales Growth



Source: State-run oil companies' provisional sales data

Govt Cuts Windfall Tax on Domestic Crude, Hikes Duty on Diesel, ATF

New Delhi: The Centre has reduced windfall gain tax on domestically produced crude oil marginally to ₹6,700 per tonne from ₹7,100 per tonne. The export duty on diesel is increased to ₹6 per litre from earlier ₹5.50 per litre. The government also increased duty on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) to ₹4 per litre from the earlier ₹2 litre.

The duty on petro exports will continue to be nil. The new duty will be effective from September 2, a notification issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said.

The Centre on August 14 had revised windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil to ₹7,100 per tonne from ₹4,250 per tonne. On July 1, 2022 the government im-

posed an export duty of ₹6 per litre on petrol and ATF and a ₹13 per litre duty on export of diesel. A windfall tax of ₹23,250 per tonne was imposed on the sale of domestic crude. Since then, the Centre has been reviewing the levies every fortnight or so based on global crude oil prices.

HIKE IN LPG PRICE

The price of commercial LPG, used in establishments such as hotels and restaurants, was reduced by ₹157.50 per cylinder. A 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder now costs ₹1,522.50 in the national capital. The reduction comes on the back of a ₹100 per cylinder cut effected from August 1. — Our Bureau

Context: Consumption of diesel dropped 2.9% and that of petrol rose 0.4% in August over last year, according to the state oil companies' data. The demand for aviation turbine fuel (ATF) rose 9.5% year-on-year in August while that for LPG rose 4.4%.

Windfall Tax

- The **purpose of a windfall tax is to impose additional taxes** on a company's profits generated from an external event, often unexpected, such as the increase in energy prices due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- **According to the United States Congressional Research Service**, a windfall is defined as an increase in income that is neither earned nor anticipated, and it does not result from any extra effort or expenses on the part of the entity.
- **These profits cannot be attributed** to the company's intentional actions, such as an investment strategy or business expansion.
- Governments typically **impose a retroactive one-time tax, known as a windfall tax**, on such profits, in addition to the regular tax rates.

The reason for implementing a windfall tax

- It is **introduced to finance social welfare** initiatives.
- It serves as an **additional source of income** for the government.
- It functions as a means for the **central authority to reduce the nation's expanded trade deficit**.

India lags behind in green energy subsidy race

FROM PAGE 16

also pushed up costs for many Indian panel manufacturers, which are choosing to sell to the hungry U.S. market rather than at home. Almost half of India's domestic solar-panel production is now being diverted to the U.S., Rustagi estimates.

That trend is worsening a domestic panel shortage in India that has already ended up delaying solar projects and pushing the country further

equivalent of the European Union's in size, the International Energy Agency estimates.

"If the West does not fund the global South to achieve this energy transition, we're all going to lose," says Gyanesh Chaudhary, chairman and managing director of Vikram Solar, one of India's biggest solar-panel makers.

Vikram plans to produce eight gigawatts of solar panels a year in India but is also expanding into the U.S. In



Currently, nearly three-quarters of India's power comes from burning coal MINT

India's size and anticipated growth is still a significant draw for clean-energy investors, and low costs make it an economic place to site manufacturing projects. The world needs as much clean-energy investment as possible to meet climate goals, and subsidies from the U.S. and other countries are helping raise that money, Chaudhary and other Indian clean-energy executives say.

Currently, nearly three-quarters of India's power

a year during the next several years, nearly five times what it has been installing in recent years. The prospect of doing that looks dim, analysts say. India will also need trillions of dollars of green investment to hit climate goals, analysts say—far more than it is spending now.

If India's emissions keep growing at recent rates, by 2050 the country could be producing roughly as much as No. 1 emitter China does now, says Satya Tripathi, a United

Context: India losing a **green energy subsidy** race against US and others.

Key Points

- The **world's most populous country and third-largest generator** of carbon dioxide **behind China and the U.S.**, India already faced significant hurdles in its energy transition.
- India's economy **could jump from fifth to rank second or third by 2050**. To meet electricity demand over the next two decades, India will have to add a power system the equivalent of the European Union's in size, the International Energy Agency estimates.
- India's size and anticipated growth is still a **significant draw for clean-energy** investors, and low costs make it an economic place to site manufacturing projects.

India's energy status: India's power mix is currently heavily reliant on coal, which is a major source of carbon emissions.

- India has pledged to change this by tripling the amount of non-fossil fuel energy sources **installed to 500GW by 2030**.
- **India is blending 10 % of ethanol** in its petrol and targets to take it to 20 by 2025.
- **In world, India's rank** is 4th in wind power, 5th in solar power, 4th in renewable power installed capacity.

Call for Proposals under WISE-SCOPE Fellowship

Context: Societal challenges refer to **problems and issues that affect societies** on a large scale, often spanning across multiple domains such as environment, technology, health, energy, waste, water, management, agriculture, economics, and more.

WISE-SCOPE Fellowship

- **Stands for:** The Women In Science and Engineering (WISE)-Societal Challenges with Opportunities (SCOPE) Fellowship Program
- **Aim:** To provide opportunities to Women Scientists and Technologists who have completed PhD and want to utilize their S&T knowledge and expertise for the benefit of society.
- This **program promotes projects** that directly deal with challenges at grassroots level and address them through S&T interventions.
- Projects under **WISE-SCOPE should provide S&T solutions** to our social problems, livelihood generation, drudgery reduction, health and nutrition-related issues, management of natural resources, sustainable agriculture, climate change, disaster management etc.

Thematic Areas:

- Energy, Water and Waste Management (EWWM)
- Engineering and Technology Development (ETD)
- Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development (ECSD)
- Agriculture and Allied Sciences (AAS)
- Health, Food and Nutrition (HFN)

India will be losing groundwater three times faster in 2041-2080, finds study

GOING DOWN & DOWN

Depleting ground water level in the country:

No. of wells analysed across the country during 2003-13 to find out ground water level | **10,219**

Comparison of ground water data for the pre-monsoon 2013 with decadal mean of the pre-monsoon (2003-12) shows the following result:

No. of wells showing fall in ground water level

5,699

No. of wells showing rise in ground water level

4,450

No. of wells showing no change

70

Fall in water level in wells

Tamil Nadu	76
Punjab	72
Kerala	71
Karnataka	69
Meghalaya	66
Haryana	65
West Bengal	64
Delhi	62

(Figures in %)

Rise in water level in wells

Dadar & Nagar Haveli	80
Arunachal Pradesh	66
J&K	62
Madhya Pradesh	58
Puducherry	57
Chhattisgarh	55
Assam	54
Rajasthan	51

(Figures in %)



OTHER BASIC FACTS

> India has 18% of the world's population; It has 4% of water resources of the world

> Annual per capita availability of water decreases from 6,042 cubic metre in the year 1947 to 1,545 cubic metre in 2011

> Annual per capita availability of water was 1,816 cubic metre in 2001

> Annual per capita availability of water will further reduce to 1,340 cubic metre by 2025 and to 1,140 cubic metre by 2050

Context: India will be losing groundwater three times faster in 2041-2080, finds study.

- The rate of depletion of groundwater in India during **2041-2080** will be thrice the current rate with **global warming**, according to a new report.

Key Points

- As the **country becomes warmer**, people will draw more water from underground, leading to faster depletion.
- The **projection that continued warming may triple groundwater depletion** rates over the coming decades was made under a business-as-usual scenario.
- Warming-induced groundwater** pumping will also likely increase the area facing groundwater **overexploitation** in the future.
- Currently, **most overexploitation of aquifers** is concentrated in the northwest and south India, but the study results further suggest overexploitation may expand to include **aquifers in the southwest, the southern peninsula**, and central India by 2050.
- Water resources in India:** India has 18% of the global population **but only 4% of the freshwater resources**.
- Groundwater in India:** As per, Central Groundwater Board of India, **17% of groundwater blocks are overexploited**, meaning that the rate at which water is extracted is higher than the rate at which the aquifer can recharge. Groundwater support over 60% of irrigated agriculture and around **85% of domestic water supply in rural areas** and **45% of it in urban areas**.

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