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DownToEarth
FORTNIGHTLY ON POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT,
ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

**Science
Reporter**



MK Yadav Sir

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Banks may need 20% more funds for market risk

BHASKAR DUTTA
Mumbai, 26 February

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) recently released draft guidelines on minimum capital requirements provide more flexibility to banks for treatment of certain instruments, but lenders may need 15-20 per cent more in capital for market risk, bank officials said.

On February 17, the RBI released draft guidelines on minimum capital requirements for market risk based on Basel III standards. It has sought stakeholder comments on the draft by April 15.

The guidelines make a clear demarcation between instruments to be traded in the trading book and the banking book. The instruments kept in the former are subject to market capital risk requirements while those in the banking book are subject to credit risk capital requirements.

"The devil is in the details. This circular is effectively based on Basel's FRTB (Fundamental Review of Trading Book) guidelines. When that circular came in 2019, all the banks more or less did a computation based on those revised guidelines and the effective capital charge across the banking industry was 50 to 100 per cent more than the capital that the banks used to keep," an official at the market risk department of a bank said.

"This guideline is more or less in line with the FRTB, except the risk weights are lower. But, anyway, the early estimation is that the capital requirement may definitely go up by 15-20 per cent," the official said.

In February 2019, the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision released revised guidelines for minimum capital requirements for market risk. The norms provide clear boundaries between the trading book and the banking book and replace previous requirements for minimal capital.

The new RBI draft guidelines have defined the trading book and the banking book based on the ability of banks to trade specific instruments, another bank official said, adding that lenders now have a greater degree of flexibility in the classification of illiquid instruments.

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RBI'S DRAFT NORMS

▶ Draft circular defines trading book and banking book based on the ability of banks to trade specific instruments

▶ With the new norms, the entire market-risk capital charges that banks compute change

▶ For some instruments, only credit-risk capital charges would be applicable with no market-risk capital charge

▶ Lenders now have a greater degree of flexibility in the classification of illiquid instruments

▶ An official says draft norms are more or less in line with the Fundamental Review of Trading Book, except the risk weights are lower

Context: The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) recently released **draft guidelines on minimum capital requirements** provide more flexibility to banks for treatment of certain instruments, but lenders may need 15-20 per cent more in capital for market risk.

- The RBI released this guidelines for market risk based on **Basel III standards**.
- **Basel Norm III** is a regulatory framework followed on a voluntary basis on a global scale which deals with capital adequacy in banks, stress testing, and market liquidity risk.

Key highlights of the draft guidelines

- As per the proposed norms, banks will use the **simplified standardised approach** to compute risk-weighted assets for market risk.
- **Market risk** is defined as the risk of losses in on- and off-balance-sheet positions arising from movements in market prices.
- The risks subject to **market risk capital requirements** include interest rate risk and equity risk for trading book instruments, and foreign exchange risk for trading book and banking book instruments.
- The **capital requirement** arising from the simplified standardised approach is the sum of the capital requirements arising from each of the three risk classes—interest rate risk, equity risk, and forex risk.
- Banks have to maintain the minimum capital requirement in terms of **two separately calculated amounts**:
 - First "**specific risk**" of each security, both for short and long positions.
 - Second "**general market risk**" towards interest rate risk in the portfolio.
- The capital requirement for interest rate risk for the "**specific risk**" category will be computed based on the lowest rated debt instrument attracting the highest specific risk capital charge, and capital requirements for "**general market risk**" need to capture the risk of loss arising from changes in market interest rates.
- The **capital requirement for equity risk** for specific risk will be 9%, and for general market risk 9%.
- The guidelines are **not applicable to cooperative banks, local area banks, payments banks, regional rural banks, and small finance banks**.

INDIAN ENERGY EXCHANGE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Infrastructure)

IEX to start High Price Day Ahead Mkt

Indian Energy Exchange has planned to launch a High Price Day Ahead Market segment by mid March, which will facilitate electricity generating firms to sell power at a price as high as ₹50 per unit.

Earlier this month, the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) allowed three categories of power generators to participate in the HP-DAM market—gas-based generating stations using imported RLNG and naphtha, thermal plants using only imported coal, and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)—on the petition of IEX. "IEX has received approval from CERC to launch the High Price Day Ahead Market (HP-DAM) in the integrated day ahead market (I-DAM) segment. We expect to launch the segment by the mid of March 2023," Rohit Bajaj, head-business development, regulatory affairs and strategy, IEX said. The relaxation in norms by the CERC will provide relief to three categories of power generating companies (gencos)—those running their plants on expensive natural gas (RLNG), imported coal and BESS (Battery Energy Storage System).

PTI

Context: Indian Energy Exchange is set to launch the High Price Day Ahead Market segment by mid March.

- This will will **facilitate electricity generating** firms to sell power at a price as high as ₹50 per unit.

Indian Energy Exchange (IEX)

- **About:** It is India's **first and largest energy exchange**.
 - It is an **automated trading platform** that allows physical delivery of electricity and two certificates known as Renewable Energy Certificates and Energy Saving Certificates.
 - The exchange platform **enables efficient price discovery** and increases the accessibility and transparency of the power market in India while also enhancing the speed and efficiency of trade execution.
- **Listed company:** The Exchange is a publicly listed company with **NSE and BSE**.
- **Regulation:** **Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)** regulated Indian Energy Exchange.
 - CERC is a **statutory body and a quasi-judicial body**.
 - **Power Market Regulations 2010** are one among various regulations that regulate IEX.
- **Various product segments:**
 - **Day-Ahead Market:** It is a market **for physical electricity trade**. It is used for deliveries for any/some/all 15-minute time blocks in 24 hours of the next day starting from midnight.
 - **Term-Ahead Market:** Participants can **buy or sell electricity on a term basis** for a duration of up to 11 days ahead.
 - **Renewable Energy Certificates:** The **Renewable Energy (RE) generator** can opt to get RECs against the green attributes of their generation. The RECs can be sold by these generators through IEX.
 - **Energy Saving Certificates:** Also called ESCerts, these are **tradable certificates** under the Perform-Achieve-Trade (PAT) Scheme.
 - **PAT scheme** is a regulatory instrument to reduce specific energy consumption in energy-intensive industries, with an associated market-based mechanism to enhance the cost-effectiveness through certification of excess energy saving which can be traded.

‘Minimum Broadband Speed at 2 Mbps to Improve Service Quality’

BIF says move will improve the quality of service in rural, suburban and fringe areas of metros

Subhrojit Mallick
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The change in the definition of minimum speed for broadband in India to 2 Mbps from 512 Kbps will improve overall quality of service for consumers, particularly in rural, suburban and fringes of metros who are heavy video consumers and rely on video and data rich apps, said Broadband India Forum president TV Ramachandran.

He added that it will lift the overall quantum of per capita data consumption and improve the service experience.

Ramachandran said presently an uneven distribution of broadband speeds across metros, sub-urban and rural areas is bringing down the average data consumption in the country. As many as 45,180 villages in India do not have any 4G coverage, BIF said.

"If operators will have to consistently deliver at least 2 Mbps data speeds in all those areas also, people living in those areas will have a legal basis to go and demand higher speeds," he said.

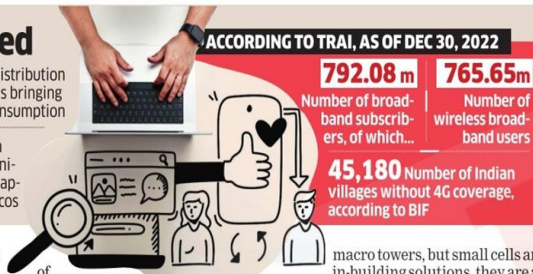
As of December 30, 2022, India

Up to Speed

ACCORDING TO TRAI, AS OF DEC 30, 2022

• **At present**, uneven distribution of broadband speeds is bringing down average data consumption

• **Increase in minimum** broadband speed definition will need higher capital expenditure from cos



had about 792.08 million broadband subscribers, of which 765.65 million were wireless broadband users, and rest wireline, as per Trai's most recent report.

After considering the recommen-

TV RAMACHANDRAN
President, Broadband India Forum



If operators will have to consistently deliver at least 2 Mbps data speeds in all those areas

also, people living in those areas will have a legal basis to go and demand higher speeds

dations of the regulatory body, the Department of Telecommunications notified that broadband services must have a minimum download speed of 2 Mbps.

The four-fold increase in the minimum broadband speed definition will require higher capital expenditure from telecom operators, especially in rural areas where people rely more on videos than any other media, as they need to listen to things to understand, Ramachandran said.

"We don't have (tower density) anywhere near as much as China, for example, and this is not only

macro towers, but small cells and in-building solutions, they are all needed in the right proportion. We are far away from that. We need much more infrastructure than what we have at present," Ramachandran said.

However, he added that the government should not look at revenue maximisation, rather encourage more investments in the networks.

Revenue will come to the government indirectly from the public, once investments in networks deliver better quality, more subscribers will come on who will use the networks better to increase productivity, generate income and have a multiplier effect.

Context: The change in the definition of minimum speed for broadband in India to 2 Mbps from 512 Kbps will improve overall quality of service for consumers, particularly in rural, suburban and fringes of metros who are heavy video consumers and rely on video and data rich apps.

Key Points

- Recently, the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)**, on recommendation of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has updated the definition of broadband for telecom operators, increasing the minimum speed requirement to 2Mbps from 512 Kbps which had been in place since 2013.
- Updation of definition was overdue as **The National Telecom Policy 2012** which was replaced by The National Digital Communications Policy 2018, had set a goal of updating the definition of broadband to 2Mbps by 2015.

New Definition

- Capacity:** Broadband is a data connection that can support interactive services including Internet access and has the capability of the **minimum download speed of 2 Mbps (Megabits per second)** to an individual subscriber from the point of presence (POP) of the service provider intending to provide Broadband service,
- Coverage:** **Wired broadband and wireless broadband** will both be subject to this 2Mbps limit.

White and Grey Spots

- White spots:** These are those places **without cellular connectivity**.
- Grey spots:** These are areas that are connected but **may not let users get enough out of their access**.

Govt plans 10 'Clean Plant Centres' to boost fruit crop production

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

WITH THE demand for foreign planting materials of fruits like apple, avocado and blueberry rising over the years, the Centre plans to set up 10 'Clean Plant Centres', on the lines of those in developed countries such as the US, Netherlands and Israel, to boost domestic production of the selected crops.

These centers will be set up under the 'Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program', which was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget 2023-24.

"The concept of Clean Plant Centres is unique in itself and does not exist in India," said a source at the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

The source said the 10 centres will be established for fruit crops like apple, walnut, almond, grapes, mango, pomegranate, among others, with an overall budget of Rs 2,200 crore in the next seven years till 2030.

Highlighting the need for the programme, the source said it is very difficult to get disease-free and genuine planting materials for horticultural crops in India. The process of importing plants is very cumbersome, as the imported plants must be kept in quarantine for two years. After the establishment of the Clean Plant Centres, this period will be reduced to six months, the

source said. The Clean Plant Centres will provide services of disease diagnostic, therapeutics, multiplying of plants and generation of mother plants, the source added.

The centres will be fully funded by the Centre. It will be implemented in a PPP mode in partnership with research organisations, agriculture universities and private sector partners, the source said, adding that the National Horticulture Board (NHB) will anchor the clean plant programme.

The demand for imported planting material of various fruit plants has risen sharply over the years. According to a source, the permissions given by the EXIM committee for import of planting material of fruits during 2018-2020 show that in 2018, 21.44 lakh apple plants were imported, which increased to 49.57 lakh in 2020.

There is also a jump in the number of avocado plants import permissions. In 2018, permission for import of 1,000 avocado plants was given, which increased to 26,500 in 2020. Similarly, the number of blueberry plants allowed for import has increased from 1.55 lakh in 2018 to 4.35 lakh during 2020, the source said.

Besides, fruit plants of banana, date palm, kiwi, pomegranate, raspberry, strawberry, walnut, winegrape, grape, guava, olive, peach, pear and plum plants are also being imported in the country, the source added.

Context: With the demand for foreign planting materials of fruits like apple, avocado and blueberry rising over the years, the Centre plans to set up 10 'Clean Plant Centres', on the lines of those in developed countries such as the US, Netherlands and Israel, to boost domestic production of the selected crops.

- These centers will be set up under the 'Atma Nirbhar Clean Plant Program', which was announced in the Union Budget 2023-24.

Atma Nirbhar Clean Plant Program

- **About:** To increase the value of horticultural crops and to boost productivity, the Gol launched the "Atmanirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant Programme".
 - The Gol is to use only clean horticultural plants in this program.
 - Also, it will promote the use of clean plants.
- **Objective:** To increase the availability of disease-free plant material.
 - This will help in improving the value of the horticultural crops. The Gol allocated Rs 2,200 crores for this scheme.
- **Clean plants:** A clean plant means the plant has been tested for several things before planting. The testing made before planting is as follows:
 - Plants are checked for viruses, bacteria, or fungi. Those plants infected with these microorganisms are not planted.
 - Plants that are economically important are put under the category of clean plants
 - Some of them shall even be maintained under controlled conditions for increased productivity.
- **Process to made clean plants:** First, the plants are checked for pathogens.
 - Second, actively growing ones are identified.
 - Then tissue samples are collected from these actively growing plants.
 - These tissues are fused with other plants to increase their productivity as well.

INDIAN AIR FORCE TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE DESERT FLAG VIII

Context: An Indian Air Force contingent comprising of 110 Air Warriors has arrived at Al Dhafra air base of United Arab Emirates for participating in **Exercise Desert Flag VIII**. The exercise is scheduled from 27 Feb 23 to 17 Mar 23.

Exercise Desert Flag

- **About:** It is a **multilateral air exercise** in which Air Forces from UAE, France, Kuwait, Australia, UK, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, Republic of Korea, and USA would also be participating.
 - **UAE leads** the exercise.
- **Objectives:** The aim of the exercise is to **participate in diverse fighter engagements** and learn from the best practices of various Air Forces.
- **India's Participation:** India participated in the Desert flag Exercise for the **first time in 2021**.
 - The IAF would be participating with **five LCA Tejas and two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft**.
 - This is the first occasion when the LCA Tejas shall participate in an international flying exercise outside India.
 - India conducts **two other exercises with UAE**: Bilateral naval exercise called **BILAT** and the Air Force Exercise called the **EAGLE-II**.

INDIAN AIR FORCE TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE COBRA WARRIOR AT WADDINGTON IN UK

Context: An Indian Air Force contingent comprising 145 Air Warriors departed Air Force Station Jamnagar for participating in **Exercise Cobra Warrior** at the Waddington Air Force Base of the Royal Air Force in United Kingdom. The exercise is scheduled from 06 Mar 23 to 24 Mar 23.

- The IAF is participating in the exercise this year with five Mirage 2000 fighters, two C-17 Globemaster III and an IL-78 mid air refueller aircraft.

Exercise Cobra Warrior

- **About:** It is the **largest joint military exercise**, which are conducted by Royal Air Force (RAF) in United Kingdom for more than a decade.
- **Participating Countries:** It is a multilateral Air exercise in which Air Forces from **Finland, Sweden, South Africa, United States of America and Singapore** would also be participating alongside Royal Air Force and IAF.
- **Objectives:** The aim of the exercise is to **participate in diverse fighter aircraft engagements** and learn from the best practices of various Air Forces.

Other Joint Exercises between India and the UK

- **Navy:** Konkan
- **Air Force:** Indradhanush
- **Army:** Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR

Access and benefit-sharing: Paper proposes 8 principles on use of indigenous medicine

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted last year respects the rights of indigenous people on biodiversity



NEXT NEWS >

By Rajat Ghai
Published: Friday 24 February 2023



Decoding the 23 targets set at COP15

A total of 196 countries have signed a historic deal to protect 30% of the world for nature by 2030 in Montreal

REDUCING THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

- 1) Halting biodiversity loss:** Bringing the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance close to zero, while respecting the rights of indigenous people
- 2) Effective restoration:** At least 30% of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration
- 3) Mapping linkages:** Sustainable use of above areas is consistent with conservation outcomes
- 4) Saving endangered species:** Urgent steps to halt human induced extinction of threatened species; maintain their diversity through in situ and ex situ conservation
- 5) Protecting wild species:** Sustainable, safe and legal use of wild species; preventing overexploitation
- 6) Invasive alien species:** Mitigating their impacts by reducing rates of introduction by 50%; controlling them in priority sites such as islands
- 7) Tackling pollution:** Reduce pollution risks to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions
- 8) Climate crisis:** Minimise impact of climate change and ocean acidification through nature-based solutions



Monitored wildlife populations have seen a 69% drop on average since '70, say WWF, IUCN

MEETING HUMAN REQUIREMENTS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE USE

- 9) Serving humans:** Ensure use of wild species yields benefits for humans, especially for those most dependent on biodiversity
- 10) Ecosystem productivity:** Sustainable management of areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry for resilience and long-term productivity
- 11) Handling nature's contributions:** Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people through regulation of air, water, and climate



Indigenous rights have been included in one-third of the new framework's targets

- 12) Biodiversity in urban fabric:** Increase the area and quality and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas
- 13) Sharing genetic resources:** Take effective legal, policy, administrative and capacity-building measures to ensure equal sharing of benefits of genetic resources

TOOLS AND SOLUTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINSTREAMING

- 14) Policy-making:** Integration of biodiversity and its values into policies across all levels of govt, other sectors
- 15) Legal perils for businesses:** Regular assessments by transnational firms of their risks, dependencies, impacts on biodiversity; report on compliance with regulations
- 16) Making eco-friendly choices:** Encouraging people to make sustainable consumption choices, reduce global footprint of consumption
- 17) Biosecurity measures:** Adopting such steps for handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits
- 18) Removal of harmful incentives:** Identify by 2025, and eliminate/reform incentives harmful for biodiversity; cut them by \$500 bn per year by 2030
- 19) Biodiversity finance:** Increasing financial resources, mobilising \$200 billion per year by 2030
- 20) Technical cooperation:** Strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology
- 21) Sharing knowledge:** Access to information by decision makers, practitioners and public; access to technologies of indigenous peoples only with their consent
- 22) Equal representation:** Ensuring equitable representation in decision-making
- 23) Gender based review:** A gender-responsive approach by recognising women's rights and access to natural resources



Signatories aim to ensure \$200bn per year is channelled to conservation initiatives

KUNMING-MONTREAL TARGETS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Context: A group of practitioners, activists, scholars, lawyers and human rights defenders has come together and proposed a set of ethical guidelines that they say can guide **Western psychedelic research and practice on traditional indigenous medicines**.

- On December 19, 2022, delegates at the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** which respects the rights of indigenous people on biodiversity.
- Key Points**
- Indigenous healing medicines like **Ayahuasca** are rising in popularity. Yet, the economic profits hardly accrue to the communities and regions from where these medicines originate.
 - International demand is driving people to unsustainably harvest **iboga**, the plants used to make **ayahuasca** and the hallucinogenic cactus **peyote**.
 - There are frameworks that **mention indigenous rights** to the use and development of their traditional medicines and related practices.
 - These include the Article 8 (j), Article 16 and Annex 1 of the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** as well as the Articles 7 and 12 of the CBD's Nagoya protocol on Access and benefit-sharing (ABS).

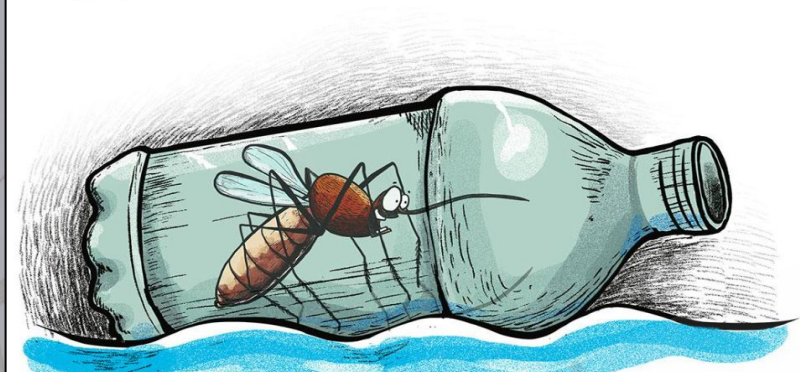
Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

- The framework has **23 targets** that the world needs to achieve by 2030.
- The targets are ambitious, considering that biodiversity is in a poor state.
- Delegates were able to build consensus around the deal's most ambitious target of protecting 30% of the world's land and seas by the decade's end, **a goal known as 30-by-30**.
- The deal also directs countries to **allocate \$200 billion per year** for biodiversity initiatives from both the public and private sectors.
- The **Global Environment Facility** has been requested to establish a Special Trust Fund to support the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework ("GBF Fund").
- This is to ensure **successful implementation**.

Accelerated breeding: Plastic waste in urban drains can lead to an explosion of mosquitoes; here's how

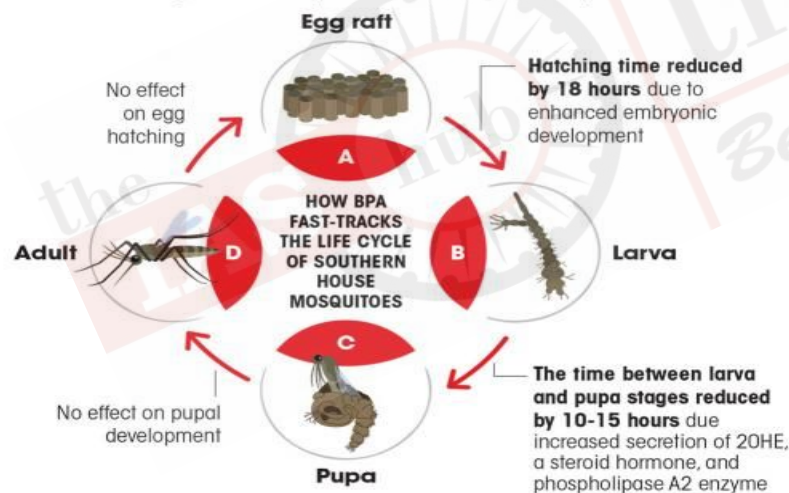
Bisphenol A, a chemical used for softening plastics, shortens the mosquito life cycle and leads to population explosion

By Evans Asirvadam
Published: Sunday 26 February 2023



Plastics quicken mosquito life cycle

A bisphenol A (BPA) concentration of 1 mg/L in wastewater can shorten the life cycle of mosquitoes from 13 to 10 days



Source: Based on "Bisphenol A acts as developmental agonist in *Culex quinquefasciatus* Say" published in *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* on May 31

Context: Bisphenol A, a chemical used for softening plastics, shortens the mosquito life cycle and leads to population explosion

Adverse effect

- When ingested in human body, the chemical that is widely used to soften plastics, paints and other products, **disrupts the endocrine system** by interfering with the hormones and affects the brain and prostate gland of fetuses, infants and children.
- Several studies establish that the chemical can **cause high blood pressure, diabetes and cardiovascular disease in adults**.
- Now, a study conducted in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, suggests it can indirectly aid in the **spread of vector-borne diseases** in humans and animals.
- It establishes that the human-made chemical can significantly **shorten the breeding time of southern house mosquitoes** (*Culex quinquefasciatus*), a major carrier of the West Nile virus, Rift Valley fever virus and avian pox in tropical and subtropical countries, and thereby aid in its quick multiplication.

Bisphenol A (BPA)

- About:** It is a **chemical compound** and one of the simplest and best-known bisphenols.
- Sources:** It is found in various products including shatterproof windows, eyewear, water bottles, and epoxy resins that coat some metal food cans, bottle tops, and water supply pipes.
 - BPA can also be found in breast milk.
- Production:** It is produced by the **condensation of phenol and acetone**.
- Solubility:** It is a **colourless solid** which is soluble in organic solvents, but poorly soluble in water.
- Usage:** It is produced for use primarily in the production of **polycarbonate plastics**.
- Endocrine disruptor:** BPA **acts on hormonal level** by distorting hormonal balance and inducing estrogenic effects through binding with estrogen-related receptors (ERR).
 - The resultant effects are numerous of which hormonal related abnormalities have been mostly reported.

SC intrigued by the lack of 'protection officers' for domestic violence cases

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought more information from the government about 'Mission Shakti', an umbrella scheme for the safety, security, and empowerment of women, intrigued by a possible chronic shortage in 'protection officers' to deal with domestic violence cases.

A government document in the top court shows that 4.4 lakh cases of domestic assault are pending across a sample 801 districts.

Though most of these districts have 'one-stop centres', established under 'Mission Shakti' to receive victims, there is still a lack of clarity about how many of them actually employ protection officers to effectively help the traumatised

survivors. Appointment of protection officers is mandated under Section 8 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

Protection officers, who should ideally be women, have a pivotal role under the law. They help victims file complaints, give information to the police, provide immediate protection and support, inform victims about their legal rights and support them through the court proceedings.

Essential tasks

"Protection officers – like the Magistrates – who are tasked with the implementation of the enactment, have been conceived as the backbone to effectuate the law, enacted with laudable objectives, by Parliament," the Supreme Court has said.

Protection officers, who should ideally be women, have a pivotal role from the beginning to the end

Taking on record the government's figures, a Bench of Justices S. Ravindra Bhat and Dipankar Datta recently calculated that with 4.4 lakh cases pending in 801 districts, a protection officer in each of these districts would be saddled with more than 500 cases. There is an urgent necessity to have more protection officers or the anti-domestic violence law would be reduced to a dead letter, the court indicated.

The court has asked the Secretary of Women and Child Development Ministry to meet with the principal secretaries of all the

States. Representatives from the Finance Ministry, National Commission for Women, National Human Rights Commission, Social Justice Ministry and the National Legal Services Authority should attend. The first meeting should be held in three weeks.

The court has asked the government to place on record the current status of 'Mission Shakti', specific information regarding the number of one-stop centres, their staffing pattern and data on distress calls.

The Bench also directed the Centre to disclose details of any common portal or scheme, if any proposed, to be set up concerning domestic violence cases.

The court ordered the government to file its action taken report in six weeks.

Context: The Supreme Court has sought more information from the government about **Mission Shakti** intrigued by a possible chronic shortage in protection officers to deal with domestic violence cases.

Mission Shakti

- **About:** The Government of India has launched 'Mission Shakti' – an **integrated women empowerment programme** as an umbrella scheme for the safety, security and empowerment of women for implementation during the 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26.
 - The norms of 'Mission Shakti' is applicable with effect from 01.04.2022.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Union Ministry of **Women and Child Development**.
- **Two sub-schemes:**
 - **Sambal:** for **safety and security** of women.
 - The components of 'Sambal' sub-scheme consist of erstwhile schemes of **One Stop Centre (OSC)**, **Women Helpline (WHL)**, **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** with a new component of **Nari Adalats** – women's collectives to promote and facilitate alternative dispute resolution and gender justice in society and within families.
 - **Samarthya:** for the **empowerment** of women.
 - The components of 'Samarthya' sub-scheme consist of erstwhile schemes of **Ujjwala**, **Swadhar Greh** and **Working Women Hostel** have been included with modifications.

PM: Triveni Kumbha Mahotsav revived in Bengal after 700 yrs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Triveni Kumbha Mahotsav in West Bengal, which is referred to in Vaishnava, Shakta and Bengali literature, found mention in the 98th edition of PM Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat on Sunday.

In a major thrust on cultural revivalism, Modi said various historical documents suggest that though the Triveni Mahotsav was once regarded as a centre of Sanskrit, education, and Indian culture, the age-old festival that is celebrated on the

banks of Ganga, could only be revived two years ago.

"It is special because this practice has been revived after 700 years. Although this tradition is thousands of years old, unfortunately, this festival was stopped. It should have been started after Independence, but it could not happen. Two years ago, the festival was started again by the locals," Modi said.

The PM said apart from attracting huge crowds to attend the Ganga Aarti, Rudrabhishek and Yajna that took place every day for three days, the Mahotsav also saw

traditional Bengali Kirtan, Baul, Godiyo Nritto, Sree-Khol, Pater Gaan, and Chhau-Nach become the focus of attention at the festival. "This is a very commendable effort to connect our youth to the country's golden past. There are many other such practices in India, which need to be revived," he said.

Modi said Indians promoted local toys so well that their demand has soared even in foreign countries. "When we spoke of the Indian genre of story-telling in 'Mann ki Baat', their fame also reached far and wide," he said.

- The significance of Triveni was mentioned in **Raghunandan's "Prayaschitta Tattva"**.
- It is known from various historical documents that **Saptagram** and Triveni were the places of pilgrimage as the epicenters of Sanskrit education and Sanatan Hindu culture.
- This is also mentioned in various **Mangalkavya, Vaishnava literature, Shakta literature, other Bengali literatures.**

Context: The **Triveni Kumbha Mahotsav** in West Bengal, which is referred to in Vaishnava, Shakta and Bengali literature, found mention in the 98th edition of PM's Mann Ki Baat.

- As a remarkable holy event, a **Kumbha Snan** (holy bath in the confluence of sacred rivers) was restarted again in Triveni in 2022 (12-13 Feb), the holy shrine of Bengali in the district of Hoogly under the aegis of Tribeni Kumbha Porichalana Samity.
- It is pertinent to mention that **Tribeni is 'Mukta Beni' (free flow)** and Prayag is 'Gupta Beni' (secret flow).

Triveni Kumbha

- **About:** Tribeni in West Bengal is a very important and **sacred place for Bengali Hindus** for social and religious aspects.
 - The importance of this small town in the spiritual sphere is highly acknowledged as visited by the many saints, sages and monks year after year.
 - While Allahabad is known as the Prayag in the north, this Triveni is known Prayag to the south.
 - According to various saints, this is the suitable place for Aquarius bathing in the Magh Sankranti.
- **Historical Importance:** In ancient times, sages used to come to Tribeni for **spiritual practices and attainment of liberation**.
 - After 703 years, a 'claimed' Kumbhasnan is held again at Tribeni Sangam, the confluence of two other tributaries of Ganges, Jamuna (Kunti) and Saraswati.
 - 703 years ago, **Jafar Khan Ghazi** converted the Vishnu temple at Tribeni into a mosque.
 - From that time **Kumbhasnan** and Mela were stopped.
 - After 1319 AD, a miniature **Kumbhasnan** was held again in 2022 in Tribeni very enthusiastically.
- **Historically Mentioned:** Tribeni in Bengal is a holy place for the Hindus, the sanctity of which has been **recognized for many centuries** and had been **mentioned in Dhoyi's Pavanadutam**, a Sanskrit piece of the last quarter of the 12th century.

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