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National and International News

<p>World Food Day</p> 	<p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrated on → October 16 • Reason → to commemorate the date of the founding of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in 1945. • 2023 Theme → ‘Water is Life, Water is Food’ • It calls for urgent action in managing water wisely. <p>Did you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 Theme → “Leave No One Behind” • 2021 Theme → “Safe Food Now For A Healthier Tomorrow” • 2020 Theme → ‘Grow, nourish, sustain. Together. Our actions are our future’ • 2019 → ‘Zero Hunger’
<p>Concerns regarding food security in India</p>	<p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without adaptation measures, rainfed rice yields in India are projected to reduce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ by 20% in 2050, and ○ by 47% in 2080 scenarios, • while irrigated rice yields are projected to decline by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3.5% in 2050 and ○ 5% in 2080 scenarios. • Wheat yields are projected to decrease by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 19.3% in 2050 and ○ 40% in 2080, <p>while kharif maize yields could decline by 18% and 23%.</p> <p>Key Facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 60% of India’s net sown area is rainfed, contributing to 40% of the total food production. • irrigated agriculture accounts for 72% of global freshwater withdrawals. • About 40% of the planet’s total land area is degraded, leaving farmers with less productive land.
<p>Measures taken for climate adaptation and food security</p>	<p>Key measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO supported the farmer water school program in Uttar Pradesh, which helped smallholder farmers.




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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems project reached 638 habitations in seven drought-prone districts, which included a hydrological monitoring programme. • IFAD-supported projects in Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Nagaland, and Mizoram incorporate climate-resilient seed varieties and crops, including millets, and train farmers in climate-sensitive agricultural practices and soil management to cope with increased water stress. • The WFP is collaborating with the Government of Odisha to develop solutions for smallholder farmers, focusing on women. The goal is to enhance resilience through solar technologies, establish community-based climate advisory services to help manage climate impacts, and promote a millet-value chain that reduces water usage and improves nutrition.
<p>Steps needed to achieve Food Security</p> <p>Did you know? The UN's food agencies work closely with the Government of India and State governments on innovations such as Solar 4 Resilience, Secure Fishing, and the revival of millets for renewable energy promotion, food security, and nutrition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve global food and nutrition security, political commitment is needed as much as concrete investment. • The needed policies and investments must promote: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Innovative and proven technologies 2) viable irrigation and water management strategies; 3) reduction of the climate footprint of agricultural production, 4) bring sanitation and drinking water supplies closer to rural households; 5) adopt efficient food and water recycling strategies.
<p>Sri Lanka and Bangladesh move towards RCEP</p>	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four years after India walked out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, neighbors Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are now considering their chances of membership in the 15-nation trading bloc. • Sri Lanka has already applied to join the RCEP. <p>About RCEP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCEP: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership • ASEAN initiated RCEP in 2011 • Includes 10 ASEAN members + Aus, China, Japan, South Korea, NZ • Anticipated 30% global GDP, largest free trade agreement • Facilitates cross-border trade, promotes regional commerce



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<p>Centre likely to raise the age of retirement of scientists to 65</p>	<p>Context The Science and Technology Ministry is working on a proposal to increase the retirement age of scientists to 65.</p> <p>Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: to stem the flight of its top senior scientists to universities and the Indian Institutes of Technology, where the retirement age is 65 • At present, scientists in most wings of the government retire at 60, while those working at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) retire at 62.
<p>Kaziranga Sanctuary Reopens</p>	<p>Context The Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve reopened with a literary tribute to a British-era forest officer who rid its name of any hunting connotations.</p> <p>Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick D. Stracey was born in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada and served as an Indian Forest Service officer in Assam. • He played a key role in renaming the Kaziranga Game Sanctuary as a wildlife sanctuary in 1950.
<p>Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is located in the State of Assam and covers 42,996 hectares. • It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain. • It was declared as a National Park in 1974. • It has been declared a tiger reserve since 2007. • It has a total tiger reserve area of 1,030 sq km with a core area of 430 sq. km. • It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. • It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International. • It is the home of the world's most one-horned rhinos.
<p>Railways develops anti-freeze flushes and fuel tanks for journeys in J&K</p>	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project(USBRL) links Kashmir to Kanyakumari via challenging terrain. • Maintaining liquid water and fuel in sub-zero temperatures is crucial. • Engineers at RCF Kapurthala innovated to prevent freezing issues. • Indigenous solutions implemented for toilets and fuel tanks. • Overcoming the freezing challenge is essential for successful project completion.



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About **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project**

- **USBRL:** Links Udhampur to Baramulla, integrating Kashmir with Indian Railways.
- **Objective:** Foster Kashmir's development and national connectivity.
- **Designation:** Declared a "National Project" in 2002.
- **Engineering Challenge:** Involves intricate tunnel and bridge construction in rugged Himalayan terrain.
- **Milestones:** Includes India's longest transportation tunnel and first cable-stayed bridge at Anji Khad.

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