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Indian Chemical Council Wins 2024 OPCW-The Hague Award

Context: The Indian Chemical Council (ICC) received the 2024 OPCW-The Hague Award at the 29th Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CSP) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague on November 25, 2024.

- This is the first time the award has been given to a chemical industry body, highlighting ICC's efforts in chemical safety, compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and enhancing security practices in the Indian chemical sector.

ICC's Contribution to Chemical Safety and Security:

- The ICC represents over 80% of India's chemical industry, valued at \$220 billion.
- The award acknowledges ICC's leadership in promoting chemical safety, ensuring CWC compliance, and improving security practices in the Indian chemical industry.



Key ICC Initiatives:

- **Chemical Weapons Convention Helpdesks:** ICC established helpdesks to support the industry in understanding and complying with CWC provisions, leading to increased compliance and efficient e-filing of chemical declarations.
- **'Nicer Globe' Initiative:** Focuses on chemical transportation safety, providing real-time monitoring of chemical shipments and enhancing emergency response capabilities for the safe transport of hazardous materials in India.

About OPCW and the CWC:

- OPCW is an intergovernmental organization tasked

with implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which came into force in 1997.

- The CWC is a treaty aimed at the elimination of chemical weapons and preventing their use.
- India is an original signatory of the CWC and plays a significant role in promoting its goals.
- NACWC in India is responsible for national implementation of the CWC.

OPCW's Nobel Peace Prize:

- In 2013, OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts in eliminating chemical weapons worldwide.
- To honor this achievement and further the objectives of the CWC, OPCW established the OPCW-The Hague Award in 2014. The award recognizes significant contributions towards advancing the CWC's goals.
- **Responsible Care (RC) Program:** Promotes chemical safety, security, and environmental sustainability. It includes the Security Code of RC, which strengthens safety and security in the chemical industry.

Recognition of ICC's Leadership:

- The OPCW-The Hague Award recognizes ICC's commitment to responsible industrial stewardship in India's chemical sector.
- ICC has played a key role in enhancing industry security, advancing CWC implementation, and contributing to global chemical safety efforts.
- ICC's leadership has been crucial in improving compliance, safety, and security practices in one of the world's largest and fastest-growing chemical industries.

First Phase of 'One Nation One Subscription' (ONOS)

Context and Approval: The Union Cabinet of India has approved a budget of Rs 6,000 crore for the 'One Nation One Subscription' (ONOS) initiative. This scheme aims to centralize access to scholarly journals for approximately 6,300 government-run institutions across the country.

- The primary goal of ONOS is to provide centralized access to 13,000 scholarly journals from 30 international publishers. From January 1, 2025, all government Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will have access to these journals via a unified platform.

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- At present, HEIs access journals through a fragmented system, relying on 10 library consortia and individual subscriptions. This setup covers approximately 8,100 journals across 2,500 institutions, leading to duplication and inefficiency.

Key Features of ONOS:

- Unified Platform:** A centralized system that eliminates subscription redundancies across institutions.
- Access to Leading Publishers:** Includes journals from publishers like Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and IEEE.
- Simplified Access:** Institutions need only to register on the platform to access the 13,000 journals.
- Budget Allocation:** Rs 6,000 crore will be allocated for the years 2025, 2026, and 2027.
- Flexibility:** Institutions can still individually subscribe to journals outside the 13,000 offered on the platform.

the annual subscription cost from Rs 4,000 crore to Rs 1,800 crore.


- Data Insight:** The platform will allow the government to track journal usage, improving resource utilization and future planning.
- Rationale:** The ONOS initiative aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the importance of research for national development. The National Research Foundation (NRF), as proposed in the NEP, laid the foundation for such initiatives to enhance India's research capabilities.
- Long-Term Vision:** ONOS aims to streamline access to academic resources, reduce costs, and foster a more robust research environment. By improving research capabilities, ONOS supports India's aspirations to become a global leader in education and innovation.

National Counter-Terrorism Policy

Context: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), led by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, is set to introduce a National Counter-Terrorism Policy to strengthen India's fight against terrorism. The policy aims to improve coordination between Central and state agencies, enhance counter-terrorism (CT) units, and establish specialized units in all states and Union Territories (UTs).

Key Components of the Policy:


- Uniform Specialized Terror Units:** Every state and Union Territory (UT) must have dedicated counter-terrorism units, equipped and staffed to address regional terrorism challenges effectively.
- Key Sub-Units:**
 - » **Prison Monitoring:** Monitors terrorist activities within prisons.
 - » **Language Experts:** Ensures effective communication, especially in linguistically diverse areas.
 - » **Deradicalization:** Focuses on rehabilitating radicalized individuals.
 - » **Financial Intelligence:** Tracks and disrupts terrorist financing.
- Upgraded Weapons:** Units will be equipped with advanced weapons recommended by the NSG to handle modern threats.



शिक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
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ONE NATION ONE SUBSCRIPTION

- Cabinet Approval:** Central Sector Scheme to provide nationwide access to scholarly research and journals
- Budget:** ₹6,000 crore allocated for 2025, 2026, and 2027
- Digital Access:** Fully digital process managed via a unified "One Nation One Subscription" portal
- Target Beneficiaries:** Nearly 1.8 crore students, faculty, and researchers in 6,300 institutions, including HEIs and central R&D institutions
- Coordination:** Managed by INFLIBNET, an autonomous UGC centre



Benefits of ONOS:

- Expanding Access:** Provides access to journals for up to 1.8 crore students, faculty, and researchers, including those in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- Cost Efficiency:** Reduces duplication and excess spending, resulting in cost savings for institutions.
- Better Bargaining Power:** Negotiations have lowered

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- **Standardized Training:** All units will follow a common training module set by the NSG to ensure uniformity and coordination.
- The policy aims to establish well-coordinated, well-equipped, and trained units across India to combat terrorism effectively.

Current Status of Specialized Units:

- 18 States/UTs have dedicated ATS, STF, or counter-terrorism units.
- 13 States/UTs have these units recognized as police stations.
- Unit sizes range from 80 to 650 personnel, depending on regional threats.

What is Terrorism?

- Terrorism is the unlawful use of violence, intimidation, or threats against civilians to achieve political, ideological, or religious goals. It targets non-combatants to instill fear and disrupt societies, with acts including bombings, assassinations, hijackings, and attacks on infrastructure.

Laws and Conventions Related to Terrorism in India

India has enacted several laws to combat terrorism:

- **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967:** Allows the government to ban terrorist organizations, seize assets, and detain suspects.
- **National Investigation Agency (NIA):** Established in 2008 to handle terrorism-related cases and counter national security threats.
- **Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) 2002:** Repealed in 2004, this law allowed preventive detention and stringent measures.
- **Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) 1985:** Repealed in 1995, this law allowed preventive detention but was criticized for human rights violations.

International Conventions

India is a signatory to key international treaties:

- **UN Terrorism Conventions:** Includes conventions on terrorist financing and nuclear terrorism.
- **Hague and Montreal Conventions:** Focus on criminalizing aircraft hijacking and aviation security threats.

Role of International Bodies

- **Interpol:** Facilitates cross-border police cooperation and intelligence sharing.
- **FATF:** Promotes global measures against terrorist financing.

Global Plastic Treaty Negotiations in Busan

Context: India has raised concerns at the UN-led Global Plastic Treaty negotiations in Busan, South Korea, about being pressured into using specific plastic alternatives.

- Despite banning single-use plastics in 2022 and advocating for sustainable alternatives, India expressed reluctance to support the mandated “use” of particular materials or technologies.

About Global Plastic Treaty:

- The Global Plastic Treaty is an international agreement being developed under the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to combat plastic pollution.
- It aims to create binding commitments for countries to reduce plastic waste, limit production, promote recycling, and find sustainable alternatives to plastics.

History:

- **UNEA Resolution (2018):** UNEA passed a resolution calling for international action on plastic waste, leading to the establishment of an intergovernmental process to draft the treaty.
- **INC Formation (2022):** UNEA adopted a resolution to negotiate a legally binding treaty. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) was formed to draft the treaty, with its first round of negotiations in Uruguay.

Progress:

- **INC Sessions:** Negotiations began in 2022, with sessions in Uruguay, France, Canada, Kenya, and Busan (2024). The focus has been on key treaty elements like targets and financial mechanisms.

India's stand on treaty:

- **Pushback Against “Use” of Alternatives:**
 - » India emphasized the need for research and innovation in developing non-plastic substitutes

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but clarified it would not back the mandatory use of these alternatives.

- » This stance highlights India's desire for flexibility and resistance to external pressures in adopting specific solutions.

▪ **Disagreement on Reducing Primary Plastic Use:**

- » India disagreed with the proposal to reduce the use of primary plastic polymers and harmful chemicals in products.
- » Concerns were raised about the economic impact on industries, particularly petrochemicals, that are vital to India's economy.

▪ **Financial and Technical Assistance for Developing Nations:**

- » India emphasized that any international agreement should respect national priorities and capabilities, particularly in developing nations.
- » In line with the "common but differentiated responsibilities" principle, India called for financial and technical support for developing countries to transition to eco-friendly alternatives.

▪ **Proposal for Multilateral Fund:**

- » India proposed establishing a multilateral fund to help developing countries combat plastic pollution, modeled after the successful Montreal Protocol fund for ozone depletion.
- » The fund would offer grants (not loans) to assist developing countries, with contributions from developed nations and private sector donations.

Global Disagreements on Plastic Production:

- The INC-5 negotiations have revealed disagreements, particularly from countries reliant on plastic production, such as India, China, and the U.S.
- These countries have raised concerns about the economic disruption that could result from drastic cuts in plastic production.
- Countries are contesting almost every sentence in the 18-page document presented by the INC-5 Chair, making it challenging to reach a streamlined, legally binding agreement.
- The goal is to finalize a treaty that balances the interests of all nations, paving the way for coordinated global actions on plastic pollution.

Power Packed News

Indian Army Launches 'Eklavya' Online Training Platform

- The Indian Army has introduced "Eklavya," a digital learning platform for officer training, reflecting its commitment to transformation and technology absorption. Launched by General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Army Staff, Eklavya aligns with the Army's theme for 2024 as the "Year of Technology Absorption."
- It is developed at zero cost by the Bhaskaracharya National Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N) with support from the Directorate General of Information Systems. It is hosted on the Army Data Network.
- Its scalable design integrates multiple training establishments, currently offering 96 courses across 17 Category 'A' institutions.
- The platform features three course categories:
 - » **Pre-Course Preparatory Capsules:** Shifting basic study materials online, these courses optimize physical training for practical applications and emerging concepts.
 - » **Assignment-Specific Courses:** Tailored for officers assuming specialized roles, such as information warfare and financial planning, these courses enhance on-the-job efficiency and specialization.
 - » **Professional Development Suite:** Focused on strategic skills, leadership, and emerging technologies.
- Eklavya also offers a searchable "Knowledge Highway" with research materials, fostering continuous professional education. This initiative is a significant step in modernizing military training and enhancing officer preparedness.

Gujarat Leads in Rooftop Solar Installations under PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

- Gujarat is leading in rooftop solar installations under the PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, according to Shripad Naik,

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Minister of New and Renewable Energy. So far, about 26 lakh applications have been received across the country, and over 6.16 lakh installations have been completed.

- Gujarat has achieved the highest number of installations, with over 2.81 lakh. Maharashtra has completed more than 1.20 lakh installations, while Kerala and Uttar Pradesh have installed over 51,000 rooftop solar systems each.
- The scheme is open to all residential consumers across India, with no state-wise limit for its target of 1 crore households. Residents can register and apply for rooftop solar installations through the National Portal at www.pmsuryaghar.gov.in.
- This initiative supports the adoption of clean energy by encouraging households to switch to solar power, contributing to India's renewable energy goals.

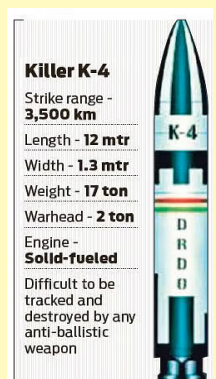
Masato Kanda Elected as ADB's 11th President

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Board of Governors has elected Masato Kanda as the 11th President of ADB. Kanda currently serves as Special Advisor to Japan's Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.
- He will take office in February 2025 and will succeed Masatsugu Asakawa. Kanda will complete the remaining term of Asakawa, which ends on 23 November 2026.
- ADB, established in 1966, is a regional development bank based in Manila, Philippines. It aims to promote social and economic development in Asia. The bank also has 31 field offices around the world.
- ADB has 68 members now, including countries from the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, as well as non-regional developed countries. When it was founded, ADB had 31 members.



K4 Missile

- India successfully tested a nuclear-capable ballistic missile, the K4, from its nuclear-powered submarine, INS Arighaat, in the Bay of Bengal. This test marks a significant advancement in India's nuclear deterrence and strategic capabilities, placing it among a select group of nations capable of launching nuclear missiles from land, air, and sea.
- The K4 missile, with a range of about 3,500 km, was tested near Visakhapatnam. It is a solid-fuelled missile, previously tested from submersible platforms.
- The test demonstrated the missile's near full range, contributing to India's goal of strengthening its nuclear deterrence with the commissioning of INS Arighaat, a submarine equipped with indigenous systems designed by Indian scientists and engineers.
- This missile test comes shortly after India's successful flight test of a long-range hypersonic missile, which can travel at speeds exceeding Mach 5 (about 1,220 km/h).
- Hypersonic missiles, which are highly maneuverable, represent a key focus of India's military advancements in response to growing regional tensions, particularly with China.



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