

● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

● ECOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DON'T WANT INDEPENDENCE BUT FULL AUTONOMY OF TIBET: DALAI LAMA

CONTEXT: Dalai Lama asserted that Tibetans are asking for more autonomy as a part of China but not political separation from China. China has, however, rejected these remarks, accusing the Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile in India since 1959, of being a "splittist" or separatist.

Dalai Lama, Tibet Movement And India-China Ties

The Dalai Lama, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, continues to preach preservation and work towards preserving the Tibetan language, religion, culture as well as ethnicity.

His struggles began in 1950 when China invaded Tibet. He visited Beijing in 1954 where met the top Chinese leadership from Mao Zedong, to Deng Xiaoping and Chou Enlai, to discuss the issues faced by Tibetans with them.

However, as matters turned worse, he escaped to India in 1959 and has been living here ever since by creating a Tibetan government-in-exile.

The Tibetan movement and giving refuge to the 14th Dalai Lama have always been one of the most contentious issues in India-China bilateral ties.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

CAUVERY DISPUTES

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court of India declined to interfere with the order of the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA), directing Karnataka to release 5,000 cubic feet of water per second (cusecs) to Tamil Nadu until September 27. Karnataka had approached the apex court against the order, contending that it was suffering from a shortfall of over 53% in inflows to its reservoirs this year, following a weak south-west monsoon, and was not in a position to release 5,000 cusecs for 15 more days.

The Cauvery water conundrum

September 21: The Supreme Court asked Karnataka to continue releasing 5,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) of water from the Cauvery river to Tamil Nadu for 15 days, in line with decisions of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) and the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)

September 22: Police arrested activists of the Federation of Karnataka Farmers' Associations in Mysuru as they tried to barge into the Mysuru Zilla Panchayat premises to gherao Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh.

September 23: A coalition of farmers and Kannada organisations have called for a bandh in Bengaluru on September 26, where the CWRC is scheduled to meet and review the situation of water availability and release.

How is the Cauvery water being shared?

The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)'s final award of 2007 and the Supreme Court's judgment of February 2018 spell out the system for sharing the river water and the institutional mechanisms for ensuring implementation of the judicial verdicts.

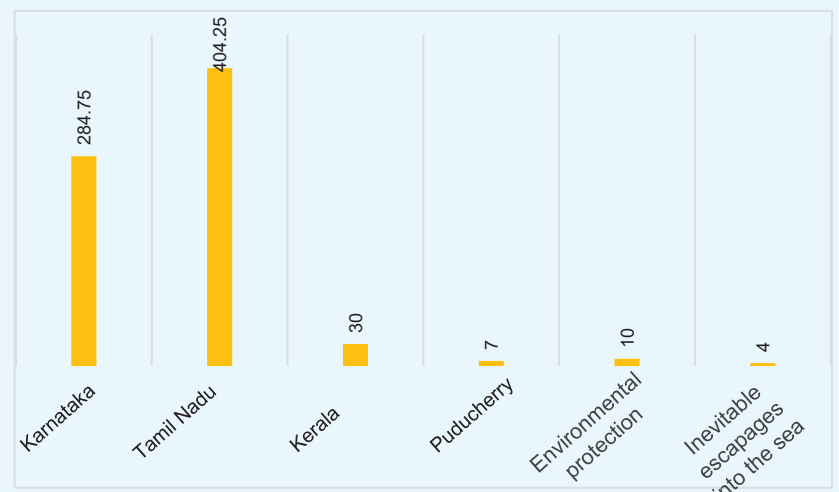


FIGURE: Column chart representation of riparian share of 740 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) of water would be available in the Cauvery basin in a normal year.

Karnataka is to ensure 177.25 tmc ft of Tamil Nadu's overall allocated quantity as per a monthly schedule, at Biligundulu, located on the inter-State border. Of this 177.25 tmc ft, 123.14 tmc ft is to be given during the period from June to September.

Why are Karnataka's farmers upset?

Kodagu of Karnataka and Wayanad of Kerala, which form part of the catchment of the Cauvery and its tributary, Kabini, registered a deficit rainfall of 43% and 56% respectively with an overall deficit rainfall of 27% between June 1 and September 23.

At least three lakh acres has been sown for a short-term crop (kuruvai) in Tamil Nadu and claims 48.5 tmc ft of water against 40.76 tmc ft received to September 21 even after giving allowance for the failure of the monsoon and the quantum of shortfall as quoted by Karnataka. Tamil Nadu should have got 112.11 tmc ft in a normal year.

Tamil Nadu will require much more water for its long-term crop of 125-135 days (samba), which is normally raised over 15 lakh acres, providing livelihood opportunities to lakhs of landless labour. A substantial portion of the farming activity under the samba crop takes place during the northeast monsoon (October-December), which is much more unpredictable than the southwest.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

WAR IN THE CAUCASUS

CONTEXT: Azerbaijan recaptured Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian-populated enclave within its borders.

The enclave's majority Armenian-Christian population held a referendum to break away from the Shia majority Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh was then run by Armenian separatists, backed by the Republic of Armenia, until recently. In 2020, Azerbaijan, backed by Turkey, fought Armenia, a Russian treaty ally, and captured much of Nagorno-Karabakh. Russia brokered a ceasefire that left Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh's biggest city, in the hands of the locals. Azerbaijan blockaded the Lachin Corridor, the main road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, leaving the 1,20,000 population of the enclave to face mounting economic miseries.



INTERNAL SECURITY

IAF INDUCTS C-295MW TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT

CONTEXT: The Indian Air Force (IAF) received the first C-295 transport aircraft. The second C-295 will be delivered in May 2024 followed by seven aircraft in 2024 at the rate of one per month.



BACKGROUND: In September 2021, the Defence Ministry signed a ₹22,000-crore deal with Airbus and Space S.A., Spain, for procurement of 56 C-295MW transport aircraft to replace the Avro aircraft in service with the IAF. As per contract, 16 aircraft would come in fly away condition, manufactured at the Airbus facility in Seville, and 40 would be manufactured in India by Airbus jointly with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL). The Final Assembly Line (FAL) at Vadodara in partnership with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) is being set up and will be ready by mid-2024 and start production by November 2024 with the first aircraft manufactured in India to be delivered in September 2026.



"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."
— Benjamin Franklin

"Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education. — Martin Luther King Jr."



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

REFORM OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, SUSTAINABILITY

CONTEXT: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres held bilateral talks and discussed the sustainability agenda and the reform of international financial institutions.

The Minister met with Mr. Guterres at the UN's headquarters on the eve of the Minister's address to the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Mr. Jaishankar will address the General Assembly on Tuesday morning on behalf of the government.

On the reform agenda is greater lending capacity for the World Bank and more board-based representation for countries on the boards of these institutions. Mr. Guterres has been a

vocal critic of the performance of these institutions.

The Minister also met with UNGA President Dennis Francis, with whom he said he had discussed India's G-20 presidency, as well as the reform of multilateralism "and giving the Global South its due on crucial issues of our times". The government has sought to position India as the advocate of the Global South.

Mr. Jaishankar also held talks with Madagascar Foreign Minister Yvette Sylla and discussed development partnership, millets and rice production, digital delivery and defense cooperation.

GEOGRAPHY

REASONS FOR JOSHIMATH SINKING

CONTEXT: Separate studies are conducted by eight premier institutions of India to know the cause of land subsidence in Joshimath town of Uttarakhand. They attributed seismic activities, construction loopholes, population pressure, poor drainage system and others as the 'likely' reason for the sinking of the Himalayan town.

The Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee, the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS), the Geological Survey of India (GSI), the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) were given the mandate to identify the causes of land subsidence by the government.

Multiple reasons by different Institutions

- In its report, the CBRI stated that 99% of the construction in Joshimath town are non-engineered. It means they are not in compliance with the National Building Code of India, 2016.
- 01. Joshimath town is situated on **Vaikrita groups of rocks overlain by morainic deposits** which are composed of irregular boulders and clay of varying thicknesses. Such deposits are less cohesive and susceptible to slow subsidence and landslide subsidence.
- 02. There is a history of creeping and occasional subsidence in the region and what happened in December 2022-January 2023 was another such event.
- The Roorkee-based NIH, in its report, said that maps of various springs, drainage network and areas of subsidence infer that land subsidence and subsurface water in Joshimath might have some connections.

01. The main reason for the subsidence appears to be internal erosion caused by the subsurface drainage, which may be due to infiltration of rainwater/melting of ice/wastewater discharge from household and hotels. Though subsidence is continuous phenomenon, it can be minimised by controlling infiltration of water, which helps in minimising the internal erosion.

02. The institution hence recommended the safe disposal of water coming from the upper reaches and waste disposal as the top priority.

- The WIHG mentioned earthquakes as a reason for slow and gradual land subsidence.
- The ISRO stated that the subsidence in the Joshimath region may be due to **toe-cutting phenomenon**, slope instability as a result of seepage of local drainage water in the soil, terrain and edaphic characteristics, loose and unconsolidated moraine materials of the slope (due to old landslide) and flash flood events in and around the area in the recent past. This has resulted in development of cracks in the ground as well as houses in Joshimath town.

Though the reports are separate and approach the problem from different angles, they are largely in concurrence with each other on the combination of factors that may have led to the aggravation of the situation in Joshimath early this year.

Joshimath's susceptibility to land subsidence because of being located on a foundation of loose sediments coupled with increasing population pressure and multi-storeyed buildings, including hotels, in the town are some of the factors cited in nearly all the reports.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONCERNS OVER CHINESE VESSEL'S VISIT TO SRI LANKA

CONTEXT: In a recent meeting with Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, US took up the coming visit of Chinese research vessel Shi Yan 6 to Sri Lanka. Reportedly, Sri Lanka reassured the American official that Colombo would adhere to a "Standard Operating Procedure" that the government has recently finalised, for all foreign vessels intending to call at a Sri Lankan port.

New Delhi had recently raised the matter with a top Sri Lankan official.

Earlier this month, it was reported that "Chinese geophysical scientific research vessel Shiyan 6" or (Experiment 6) was heading out on an "expeditionary voyage" in the eastern area of the Indian Ocean. The vessel is scheduled to operate at sea for 80 days with 28 scientific research projects from 13

research teams onboard, covering a range of more than 12,000 nautical miles (roughly 22,200 km).

The visits assume significance after Chinese military ship Yuan Wang 5 arrived at Sri Lanka's Hambantota port in August last year, despite India and the U.S. expressing strong reservation at the time.

Colombo's decision to allow the visit last year strained diplomatic ties with New Delhi, at a time when India extended unprecedented economic relief to the island nation that was experiencing its worst financial meltdown.

Meanwhile, the High Commission of India in Colombo recently organised a curtain raiser to the **Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS)** to be held in India from October 17 to 19 in Mumbai.



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ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

BANKS TO ATTRACT MORE GLOBAL INVESTMENT, SAYS S&P GLOBAL

CONTEXT: Indian banks are set to draw increasing global investment from investors looking for better returns as higher credit growth, improved margins and stable asset quality boost lenders' prospects.

Big draw

Foreign investors have been increasing their holdings of Indian private lenders, S&P Global Market Intelligence data show

- Market value of FIIs' holdings in Indian banks had risen to ₹8.36 trillion as of June 30, from ₹7.71 trillion a year earlier

- 93.5% of the value of FIIs' bank holdings concentrated in the biggest private sector banks

- U.S.-based Capital Research and Management tops list of foreign investors



As per S&P Global, the total market value of foreign institutional investors' holdings in Indian banks had risen in recent years to ₹8.36 trillion as of June 30, from ₹7.71 trillion a year earlier. This is a significant rise from the ₹6.73 trillion figure in June 2020. The majority of FII holdings — 93.5% of the value as of June 30 — was concentrated in the biggest private-sector banks. Top investees for FIIs include ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra. The market value of FIIs' holdings in private-sector banks rose to ₹7.82 trillion as of June from ₹7.29 trillion a year earlier. The market value of FIIs' holdings in Indian state-owned banks clocked in at ₹541 billion as of June. U.S.-based Capital Research and Management topped the list of foreign investors in Indian banks, followed by BlackRock.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

G-20 DIPLOMACY AND A SHIFTING WORLD ORDER (EDITORIAL)

CONTEXT: In this editorial the expert reviews the outcomes of G20 from various perspectives. It lists the various successful points agreed during the G20 summit and then analyse the G20 and India's prospects in light of various geopolitical dynamics.

The G20 Success

The outcome of G20 summit, the New Delhi Declaration brought a consensus on almost all the issues from condemnation of terrorism to climate issues, from trebling of renewable energy capacity to matters such as lifestyle for sustainable development and reform of multi-lateral development banks, apart from highlighting India's contributions such as digital public infrastructure and Unified Payments Interface.



"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." - Robert Frost

On Russia – Ukraine war

The New Delhi Declaration sharply differs from the Bali Declaration of November 2022 where, by a majority vote, the Russian Federation was condemned for its aggression in Ukraine. The difference between two Declarations is that while Bali was accusatory in tone, New Delhi sought a resolution to the conflict. Russia and China have since hailed the New Delhi Declaration in sharp contrast to their criticism of the Bali Declaration.

China's perception, need for caution

China might have welcomed the Delhi Declaration, but there is inherent foreboding in its affirmation that the G-20 was intended to be a 'forum for economic cooperation' and 'not a platform for resolving geo-political and security issues'.

Also, while welcoming the establishment of an India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor Plan (announced during the G-20), China has sent an implicit warning that it should 'not become a geo-political tool'.

It is evident that China's perception is that the G-20 was being used by the West solely to try and impose its world view.

India remains an obvious target for China and is in its 'cross-hairs'. While the West can possibly live with a situation in which several of its strategies to contain China have failed, India cannot. Two aspects — the West's acknowledgment of India's growing economic strength, and India's membership of the Quad (which is now openly accepted as a key grouping in the anti-China phalanx) — call for abundant caution on India's part, since China is unlikely to take kindly to either.

The return of two blocs

The reality of today's geopolitics is that the world faces 'emerging world disorder', the return of two antagonistic blocs, and shrinking space for the non-aligned. The stalemate in the Ukraine conflict and the eclipse of Russia's hope of a quick walkover in Ukraine seem to have encouraged the U.S. to strengthen and expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) under its leadership.

Many analysts view that under the rubric of the G-20, a subterranean conflict is being waged today by two opposing blocs to alter the balance of power. The two camps (one led by the West and the other by China-Russia) have already earned the sobriquet of 'enduring rivals', engaged in a battle for global supremacy.

Fading non-alignment

It is proving increasingly difficult for countries to remain non-aligned in the truest sense of the word. Even existing formations such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are tending to find the situation untenable. Given the multiplicity of relationships and the 'lattice work' of security agreements that have emerged, the space for non-alignment has dramatically shrunk.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

OVER 60% URBAN KIDS SPEND 3 HOURS DAILY ON ENTERTAINMENT APPS

Chart 1: How much average time per day are children between the ages of 9 and 17 in your family spending on social media, videos/OTT and online games on the Internet?

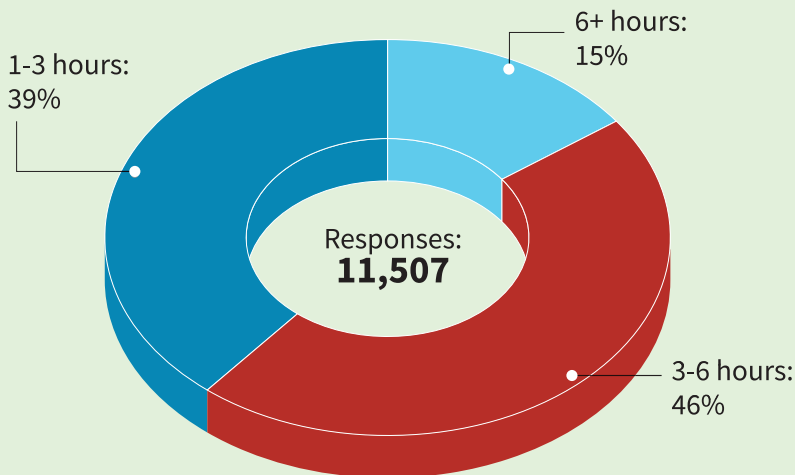


Chart 2: What do you feel children in your family are addicted to, or have to engage in everyday?

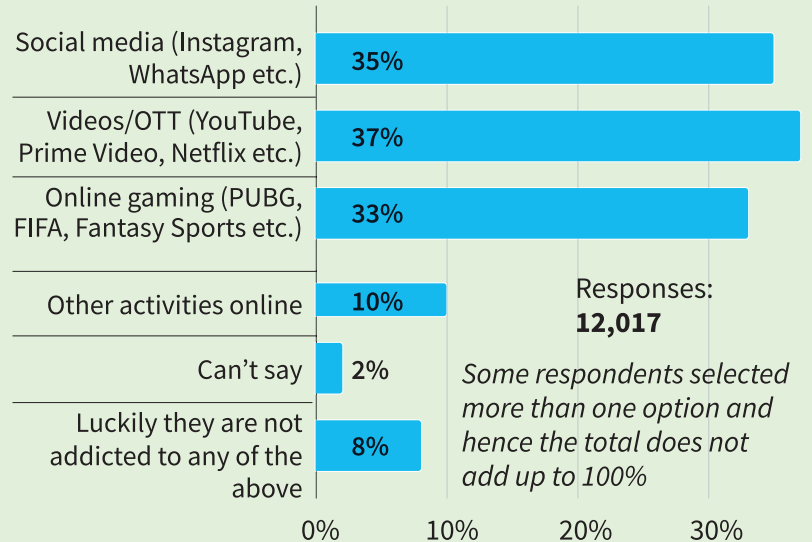


Chart 3: What emotional or mental impact of social media, videos/OTT and online games do you see on your children between the ages of 9 to 17?

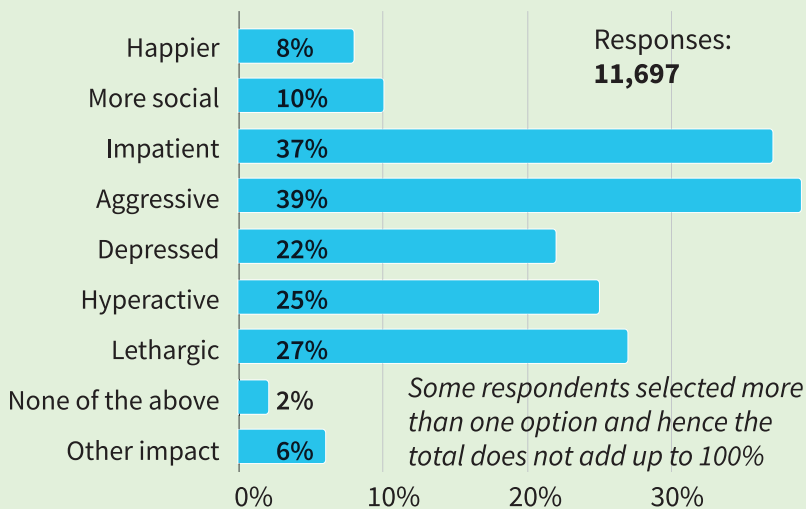
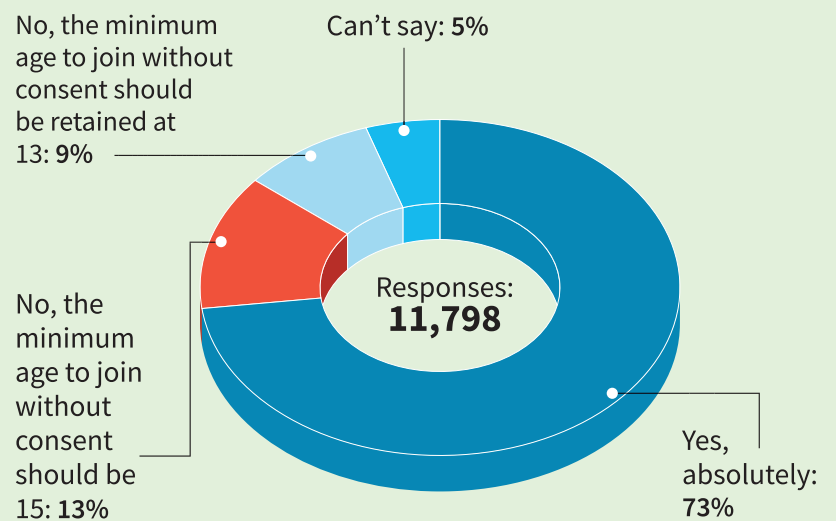


Chart 4: Should India make mandatory parental consent for children under 18 to join social media, OTT/video and online gaming platforms?



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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

AI REGULATION OVERLOOKS CRUCIAL CHILD DEMOGRAPHIC

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Modi urges global AI ethics framework. India's data potential sets policy example; child protection vital.

BACKGROUND: India is set to host two significant AI summits, highlighting the strategic significance of AI for its economy. With a projected \$500 billion boost by 2025, AI accounts for 10% of India's GDP target. India, as Chair of GPAI, has an opportunity to lead in regulating AI's impact on children and adolescents, a crucial yet often overlooked demographic in the digital age.

The Governance Challenge

- **Inadequate Regulation:** To address AI's potential harms like addiction, misinformation, and body image issues, regulation must align incentives and combat the use of opaque algorithms and dark patterns.
- **Parental Responsibility:** Current data protection laws in India place an undue burden on parents to protect their children online, even though many parents rely on their kids for online navigation.
- **Deepfake Threat:** AI-powered deep fake technology can be misused to target young people with sexually explicit content, highlighting the need for tools to manage such consequences.
- **Intersectional Identities:** India's diverse population includes various intersectional identities, and AI's biases can disproportionately affect marginalized communities, including children and adolescents.
- **Transposing Real-World Bias:** AI tends to replicate real-world biases, which can negatively impact children belonging to marginalized groups, exacerbating existing inequities.
- **Data Tracking Dilemma:** Current regulations ban the

tracking of children's data by default, potentially limiting the benefits of online personalization while aiming to protect their privacy.

What we have to do?

- **UNICEF's Guidance:** Indian regulation can benefit from international best practices, such as UNICEF's child-centered AI requirements, aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Adaptability by Age:** Effective regulation should consider the varying developmental stages of children. California's Age Appropriate Design Code Act, focusing on transparency and user-friendly language, serves as a model.
- **Evidence-Based Approach:** Encourage research to gather evidence on the benefits and risks of AI for Indian children and adolescents, forming the basis for an Indian Age Appropriate Design Code.
- **Inclusive Dialogue:** Establish mechanisms for regular dialogue with children to incorporate their insights on AI's benefits and threats, akin to Australia's Online Safety Youth Advisory Council.
- **Embracing Standards:** Due to AI's evolving nature, regulation should prioritize standards, robust institutions, and best practices to ensure openness, trust, and accountability.
- **Youth-Centric Regulation:** In shaping new laws for Internet regulation and global AI governance, prioritize the interests and safety of India's young citizens.

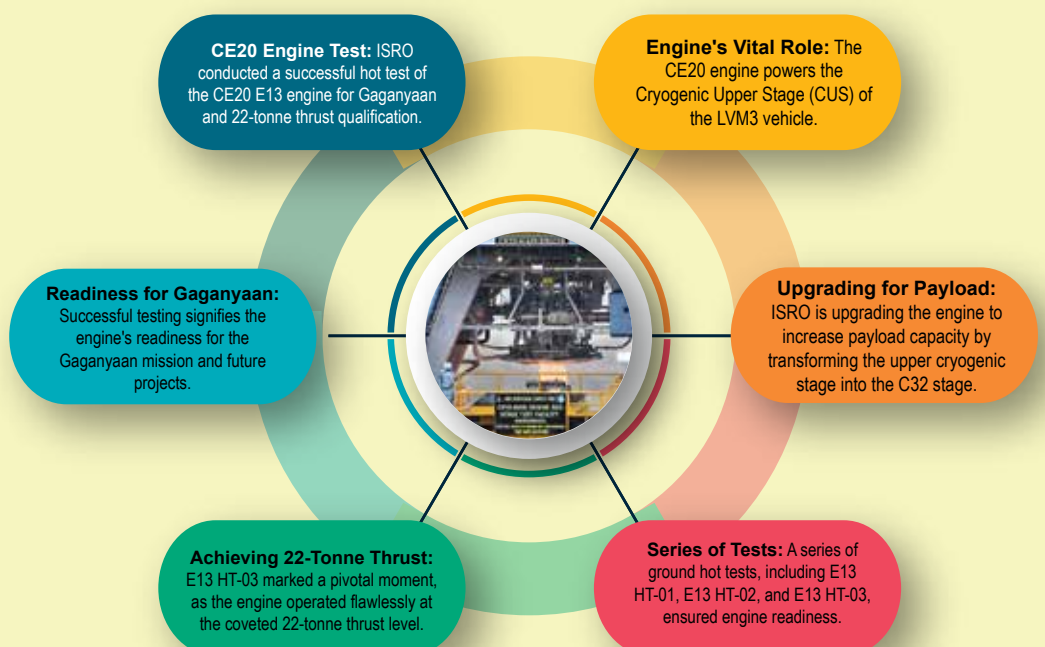
India's role in global AI regulation is crucial, with a focus needed on safeguarding children and adolescents from AI-related risks. Emphasizing child-centered AI, adapting to age groups, and fostering dialogue are vital for effective and ethical AI regulation.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISRO CONDUCTS ENGINE TEST FOR GAGANYAAN

CONTEXT: ISRO completes successful CE20 E13 engine test for Gaganyaan mission qualification and 22-tonne thrust certification.

HIGHLIGHTS: ISRO successfully tested the CE20 E13 engine for Gaganyaan qualification and 22-tonne thrust. The engine is crucial for the Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS) of LVM3, and ISRO is upgrading it for higher thrust and propellant capacity. The Gaganyaan Test Vehicle D-1/Crew Escape System mission is expected in October.





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