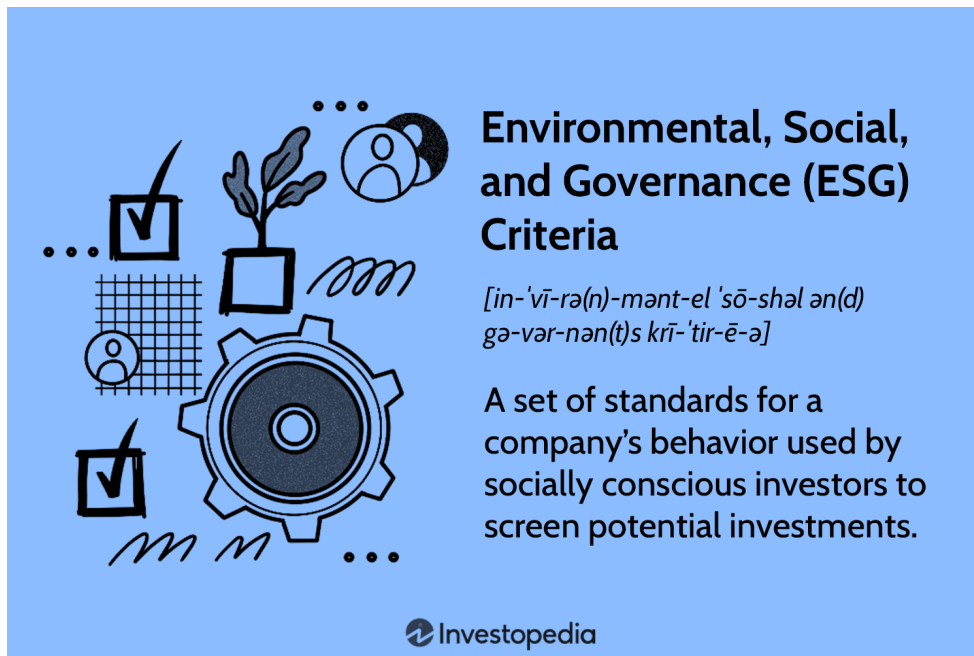


1. Environment Social and Governance Scheme Mutual Funds

Topic: Economy




The infographic features a central gear icon surrounded by various symbols: a plant growing from a square, a person icon, a checkmark in a square, a grid, and another person icon. The background is light blue.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Criteria

[in-ˈvī-rə(n)-mənt-el ˈsō-shəl ən(d) gə-vər-nən(t)s krī-ˈtir-ē-ə]

A set of standards for a company's behavior used by socially conscious investors to screen potential investments.

 Investopedia

In News: The capital market regulator, SEBI has recently introduced a separate sub-category for ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) investments under the thematic category of equity schemes.

More on the Topic:

- Under the current regulatory guidelines, **mutual funds are permitted to launch only one ESG scheme under the thematic category for equity schemes.**
- The concept of ESG investments is emerging and therefore consistent, comparable, and decision-useful scheme disclosures are desirable **to enable investors to make an informed investment decision and to prevent greenwashing.**
- In this regard, SEBI has decided to permit the launch of multiple ESG schemes with different strategies by mutual funds.
- A scheme can be introduced under the ESG category with any of the six strategies provided by the market regulator. This includes:
 - Exclusion
 - Integration
 - Best-in-class and positive screening
 - Impact investing
 - Sustainable objectives
 - Transition or transition-related investments



About SEBI ESG Funds:

- ESG Mutual Funds are **Thematic Mutual Funds that invest in socially responsible companies.**
- ESG funds are those funds whose asset allocation mostly includes shares and bonds of companies that are evaluated based on environmental, social, and governance factors.
- An organisation is said to be ESG compliant if it meets all the criteria of environmental, social, and governance standards.
- The ESG companies are assessed on their sustainability before they are given the tag.
- The ESG parameters reflect an organisation's culture, the risk involved, and management, among other things.

ESG Criterias:

- Criteria included, among others
- **Environment:** Companies that - put out carbon or sustainability reports, Limit harmful pollutants and chemicals, Seek to lower greenhouse gas emissions and Use renewable energy sources
- **Social:** Companies that - operate an ethical supply chain, support LGBTQ rights and encourage diversity, have policies to protect against sexual misconduct, pay fair wages
- **Governance:** Companies that – embrace diversity on their board, embrace corporate transparency, and employ a CEO independent of the board chair.

Source: Indian Express

2. China-Plus-1 Window

Topic: International Relations





In News: World Bank's India-born president Ajay Banga said that India has an opportunity to create jobs in the manufacturing sector by tapping into the 'China plus one opportunity, but that window is available only for a short period.

More on the Topic:

- The "China Plus One" strategy refers to a business approach adopted by companies, especially manufacturers, **to diversify their operations and reduce dependence on China as their sole production or sourcing hub.**
- This strategy emerged in response to various factors, such as **rising labour costs in China, geopolitical risks, supply chain vulnerabilities, and uncertainties related to trade policies and international relations.**
- Companies that follow the China Plus One strategy typically maintain their existing manufacturing or sourcing operations in China, which often serve as their primary base for production due to their well-established infrastructure and skilled workforce.
- However, they also establish **additional production facilities or sourcing hubs in other countries, hence the "Plus One."**

How India can benefit from China Plus One?

- India has the potential to benefit significantly from the China Plus One strategy due to its **favourable business environment, large and skilled labour force, growing manufacturing capabilities, and strategic geographic location.**
- By positioning itself as an attractive alternative to China, India can attract investments and businesses looking to diversify their operations and reduce dependence on China.
- To fully realize the benefits of the China Plus One strategy, **India needs to continue working on improving its infrastructure, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, enhancing the ease of doing business, and providing a stable and investor-friendly regulatory environment.**
- Additionally, the Indian government must continue **promoting and supporting policies that encourage foreign investments and manufacturing growth.**

Challenges to India in utilizing this opportunity:

- India faces **stiff competition from other emerging markets in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Thailand, and other countries,** as they also allure businesses adopting the China Plus One strategy.
- **Mega trade agreements like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)** add to the appeal of these Southeast Asian nations as investment destinations.
- Nonetheless, India must contend with challenges like **inadequate physical infrastructure and labour force skill shortages.**
- Addressing these issues through **infrastructure investment and skill development** is crucial for India to effectively compete, attract investment, and fully leverage the opportunities presented by the China Plus One strategy.

Source: The Hindu



3. Minimum Guaranteed Income

Topic: Economy



In News: Rajasthan introduced Minimum Guaranteed Income Bill, 2023.

More on the Topic:

- Minimum Guaranteed Income, also known as Universal Basic Income (UBI), is a social welfare concept where **every citizen or resident of a country receives a regular, unconditional cash payment from the government.**
- The payment is typically **given without any means test or work requirement, meaning it is provided to all individuals, regardless of their income level or employment status.**
- The main idea behind Minimum Guaranteed Income is **to provide a safety net for every member of society**, ensuring that their basic needs are met and **reducing poverty and inequality.**
- It aims to address issues such as **unemployment, technological displacement, and economic instability by providing a stable source of income for individuals.**

Source: The Hindu

4. Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACC)

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: The Indian Ministry of Heavy Industries will issue a fresh tender for the production-linked incentive scheme, inviting bids for the 18,000-crore Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACC) project.

More on the Topic:

- Advanced chemistry cells, also known as advanced energy storage systems or next-generation batteries, refer to a class of batteries that **go beyond traditional lithium-ion batteries and offer improved performance in terms of energy density, safety, charging speed, and lifespan.**
- These advanced chemistry cells are being developed **to meet the increasing demand for more efficient and sustainable energy storage solutions** in various applications, including electric vehicles (EVs), renewable energy integration, consumer electronics, and grid-scale energy storage.
- **Some of the key types of advanced chemistry cells:** Lithium-Sulfur (Li-S) Batteries, Solid-State Batteries, Lithium-Air (Li-Air) Batteries, Sodium-Ion (Na-Ion) Batteries etc.

Source: Hindustan Times



5. District Mineral Foundation Trusts (DMFT))

Topic: Governance



In News: CAG has found Chhattisgarh mining department has underutilised District Mineral Fund Trusts and delayed projects.

More on the Topic:

- DMFs are **statutory authorities that a State Government** sets up in districts affected by mining.
- These bodies get their legality from Section 9B under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and its amendment in 2015.
- DMFs were instituted on 16th September 2015.
- The State Government can establish a DMF as a trust or non-profit body, and contributions from miners fund a DMF.
- They are aimed at working for **the interest and benefit of people and areas affected by mining operations.**
- It is funded through the contribution of miners.
- Under the **Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)** launched by the Union Ministry of Mines in 2015, high-priority sectors can avail 60% of DMFT funds.
- The PMKKKY program is designed **to utilize funds from District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) to support the well-being of regions and individuals impacted by mining activities.**
- Its primary objective is to provide assistance and welfare initiatives to those affected by mining-related operations.

Source: The Hindu

6. Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever

Topic: Health



Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever: Introduction
Outbreak channel

In News: In India, one person succumbed to Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever recently in Gujarat.

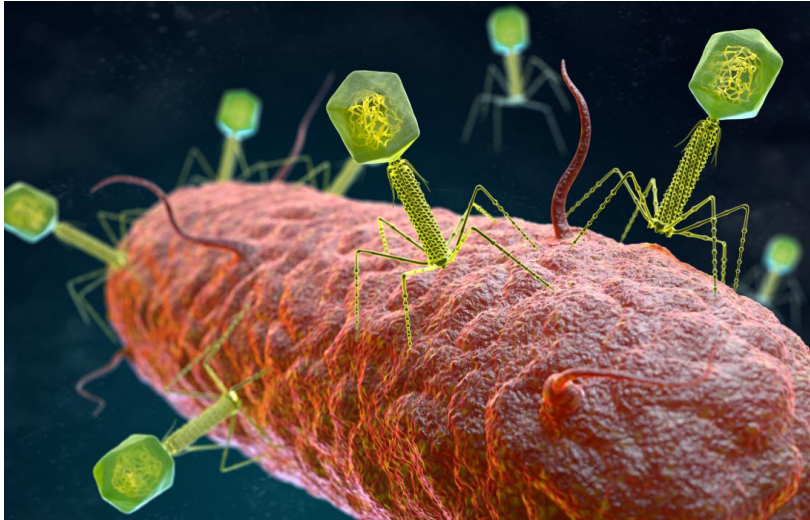
More on the Topic:

- According to the WHO, “**Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF)**” is a viral **haemorrhagic fever usually transmitted by ticks**.
- It can also be contracted through contact with **viraemic animal tissues** (animal tissue where the virus has entered the bloodstream) during and immediately post-slaughter of animals.
- CCHF outbreaks constitute a threat to public health services as the virus can lead to epidemics, has a high case-fatality ratio (10–40%), potentially results in hospital and health facility outbreaks, and is difficult to prevent and treat.

Source: The Hindu

7. Bacteriophages

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: With antibiotic resistance rising, scientists think bacteriophages — which hunt and kill bacteria could cure bacterial infections.

More on the Topic:

- The vast majority of viruses inside us are bacteriophages — **viruses that kill bacteria in our microbiomes.**
- Bacteriophages, also known as phages, **are harmless to human cells as they do not recognize them as their bacterial prey.**
- They work by **hunting down bacteria and attaching themselves to the surface of a bacterial cell, before injecting viral DNA material into the cell.**
- The viral DNA then replicates inside the bacteria, sometimes by borrowing the DNA replication hardware of the bacteria.
- Once enough new viruses have been created inside the bacterial cell, the cell then bursts to release the new viral particles.
- All this takes just 30 minutes, meaning one virus can become many in a couple of hours.

Source: The Indian Express
