

NEWS TODAY

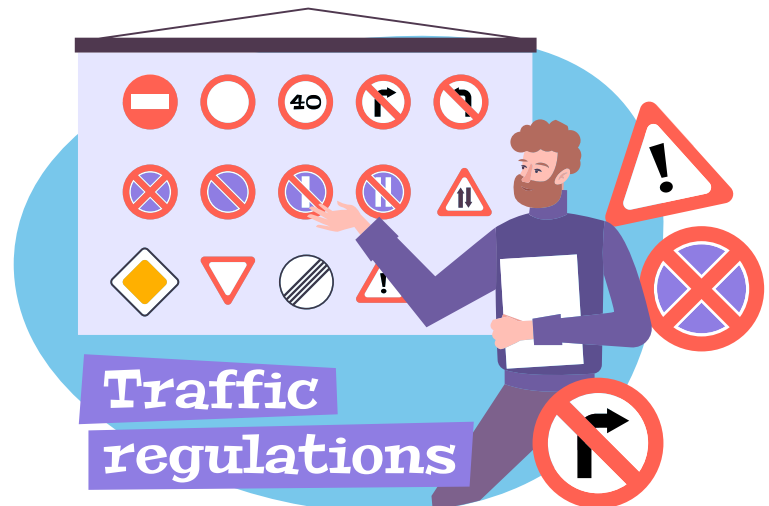
Prime Minister launches 'Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)' platform on National Unity Day

- MY Bharat is an autonomous body that is being set up by the Government of India to provide an over-arching institutional mechanism powered by technology for youth development and youth-led development.
 - ⊕ It is an initiative of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports to empower Indian youth through social mobility, educational equity, and practical skills.
- The platform connects youth with programs and learning opportunities in Businesses, Government Departments and Non-Profit Organisations.
- The establishment of MY Bharat would lead to
 - ⊕ Leadership Development in the Youth.
 - ⊕ Better alignment between the aspirations of the youth and the community needs.
 - ⊕ Enhanced efficiency through Convergence of existing programmes.
 - ⊕ Act as a one-stop shop for young people and Ministries.
 - ⊕ Create a centralized youth database.
 - ⊕ Ensuring accessibility by creating a Phygital Ecosystem - a blend of physical and digital experiences.
- MY Bharat will benefit the youth in the age group of 15-29 years, in line with the definition of 'Youth' in the National Youth Policy.
 - ⊕ In the case of programme components specifically meant for adolescents, the beneficiaries will be in the age group of 10-19 years.



Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) releases Annual Report on Road Accidents in India-2022

- Report has been prepared as per standardized formats under Asia Pacific Road Accident Data (APRAD) base project (software).
 - ⊕ APRAD acts as a tool for UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) and its member countries to develop, update, maintain and manage the road accident database.
- Key findings:
 - ⊕ 4.6 lakh accidents were reported, which claimed around 1.68 lakh lives (9.4% increase in comparison to 2021).
 - ⊕ India has the highest number of accident related deaths, followed by China.
 - ⊕ Age groups (18-45) accounted for 66.5% of total accident deaths.
 - ⊕ Rural areas reported greater number of road accidents.
- Road accidents involve various factors like human error (traffic rule violations, non-use of safety devices), road environment and vehicular condition.
 - ⊕ Over speeding accounted for 72.3% of total accidents.
- MoRTH has formulated multi-pronged road safety strategy (aka 4Es):
 - ⊕ Education: Awareness campaigns, driving training, road safety month/week.
 - ⊕ Engineering (both roads and vehicles): Road Safety Audits, Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e- DAR), automated vehicle inspection centers, etc.
 - ⊕ Enforcement: Motor Vehicle Amendment Act 2019 and electronic enforcement devices like CCTV, etc.
 - ⊕ Emergency Care: Good Samaritan protection, compensation and ambulance services.



Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers released an Approach Paper on Draft National Pharmaceuticals Policy 2023

- National Pharmaceutical Policy (2023) serves as a comprehensive framework to address the challenges faced by Indian Pharmaceutical industries and provide definitive policy interventions to enhance the collective ecosystem.
- **Challenges faced by India's pharmaceutical sectors**
 - ⊖ The high degree of import dependence on Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients and Key Starting Materials
 - ⊖ The relatively low pace of development of biologics, biosimilars and other emerging products/ trends;
 - ⊖ Regulation inefficiencies
 - ⊖ Lack of skilled human resources and access to funding
- **Objectives of the National Pharmaceutical Policy**
 - ⊖ Fostering Global Pharmaceutical Leadership
 - ⊖ Promoting Self Reliance
 - ⊖ Advancing Health Equity and accessibility
 - ⊖ Enhancing Regulatory Efficiency in the Indian Pharmaceutical Sector
 - ⊖ Attracting investments
- **Focus areas of policy**
 - ⊖ Nurturing & Promoting Research, Development & Innovation
 - ⊖ Affordable, Accessible & Equitable Access to Health Coverage
 - ⊖ Facilitating Access to Funding
 - ⊖ Regulatory Harmonization: Creating Conducive Regulations including Price Regulation and Transparency
 - ⊖ Initiate Capacity Building and development of Skilled Manpower
 - ⊖ Enhancing Policy & Program Interlinkages
 - ⊖ International Collaboration
 - ⊖ Infrastructure Enhancement
 - ⊖ Leveraging Digital Transformation
 - ⊖ Sustainability/Reducing Carbon Footprint
 - ⊖ Strengthening of Intellectual Property



India's Pharmaceutical industry:

- India has the 3rd largest pharmaceutical industry in the world by volume.
- Known as 'Pharmacy of the World', India exports pharmaceuticals to around 200 countries and territories
- India's vaccine industry caters to more than 60% of global vaccine demand.

India hosts the 6th Session of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly in New Delhi

- ISA Assembly is the apex decision-making body of ISA, in which each Member Country is represented.
 - ⊖ It makes decisions concerning the implementation of ISA's Framework Agreement and coordinated actions to be taken to achieve its objective.
 - ⊖ It meets annually at the ministerial level.
- **Key Highlights of the 6th Assembly**
 - ⊖ Increase in the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Cap for solar projects from 10% up to 35% of the project cost.
 - ◆ ISA programme for VGF provides funding for projects in developing countries.
 - ⊖ ISA announced that Global Solar Facility (GSF) is set to receive a capital contribution of \$35 million dollars.
 - ◆ In 2022, the ISA Assembly approved the Global Solar Facility, which is expected to attract private capital to flow into off-grid solar projects, rooftop solar projects, and productive use solar projects.
 - ◆ GSF will provide:
 - » Payment guarantee fund;
 - » Insurance fund to mitigate project risks;
 - » Investment fund for Technical Assistance.
 - ◆ GSF is designed to catalyze solar investments in underserved segments and geographies across Africa.
 - ◆ After Africa, GSF aims to expand to regions such as Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

International Solar Alliance (ISA)

	About:	A treaty-based international intergovernmental organization.
	Genesis:	Conceived as a joint effort by India and France. Conceptualized on side-lines of the Conference of Parties to UNFCCC held in Paris in 2015.
	Membership:	94 countries have signed and ratified (including India).
	Mandate:	Strives to develop and deploy cost-effective and transformational energy solutions powered by Sun.
	Major initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Solar Technology Application Resource Centre [STAR C] Initiative ◆ One Sun One World One Grid initiative

Report titled **Convergence of Wildlife crime with other forms of Organized Crime Released**

- In report, **Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC)** a non-profit organisation highlighted the **convergence of wildlife crime (Poaching, trade in protected species) in tandem with other forms of organized crime.**
 - ⊕ **Organized crime** is a criminal act or a series of criminal acts committed by a member or members of an organized criminal gang.
 - ◆ Examples of **convergence** of wildlife crime with organised crime includes trade of elephant ivory, pangolin scales, illegal sand mining, including cash-in-transit heists, murder, and extortion.
- **Key recommendations to deal with Convergence:**
 - ⊕ More consideration to **intelligence collection and organized crime group mapping.**
 - ⊕ **Multi-agency cooperation** to bring enforcement expertise to **target convergence.**
 - ⊕ **Alternative legislation** relating to convergent or ancillary offenses.
 - ⊕ **Utilization of specialized investigation techniques** such as undercover operations, etc.
- **Key Initiatives:**
 - ⊕ **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)**, established under the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006.
 - ⊕ **South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN)**, regional co-operation for curbing illegal wildlife trade in South Asia.
 - ⊕ **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, implemented in 1975.
 - ⊕ **TRAFFIC**, established by WWF and IUCN.

Indian Air Force deploys S-400 missile units on China, Pak border: Reports

- In 2018-19, India agreed with Russia to procure S-400 missiles.
- **S-400** is one of the world's most advanced air defence systems.
 - ⊕ It is a **mobile long-range surface-to-air missile** system developed by Russian state-owned enterprise.
 - ⊕ It has capability to **protect against almost all sorts of aerial attacks**, including drones, missiles, rockets and even fighter jets.
- **Key features:**
 - ⊕ It has command and control centre, automatic tracking and targeting systems, launchers and support vehicles.
 - ⊕ It carries separate radar systems, which **can detect aerial targets to a range of 400 kilometres (surveillance range up to 600km).**
 - ⊕ It can **simultaneously engage 80 aerial targets.**
 - ⊕ It can hit target up to altitude of up to 30km.
- **Functioning:**
 - ⊕ It **detects an aerial threat** approaching the air defence bubble, calculates trajectory of the threat, and fires missiles to counter it.
 - ◆ It has **long-range surveillance radars** that send information to command vehicle. On identifying target, command vehicle orders a missile launch.
- **Strategic Importance:** Fills gaps in India's national air defence network, complement India's indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence system etc.

S-400 vs other similar systems

- USA's **THAAD** is a one-dimensional missile system as it can fire only one type of missile upto a range of 150-200 km and cannot intercept a fighter jet.
- USA's **Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3)** has ability to intercept aerial targets at a range of 180 km.
- As compared to **Israel's Iron Dome**, S-400 has capacity to protect a much larger area from threats that are much farther.

Also in News



Rajaji Tiger Reserve

- Uttarakhand government decided to establish **Rajaji Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation.**
- **About Rajaji Tiger Reserve**
 - ⊕ Named after freedom fighter **C. Rajgopalachari** popularly known as "Rajaji".
 - ⊕ Situated along the **hills of Shivalik ranges** and in transition zone between **temperate western Himalaya** and **central Himalaya.**
 - ⊕ **Forest type:** Ranges from **semi-evergreen to deciduous** and from **mixed broad-leaved to Terai grassland.**
 - ⊕ **River:** Ganga and Song
 - ⊕ **Flora:** Red Morning Glory, Malabar Melastome, Sal trees etc.
 - ⊕ **Fauna:** Leopard, Himalayan Black Bear, Sloth Bear, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer etc.



Curcuma Kakchingense

- **Researchers in Manipur** have discovered a **new flowering plant species** named Curcuma kakchingense.
- It belongs to the **angiospermic family** Zingiberaceae which includes Curcuma, Gingers, and Cardamom.
- It is a robust plant, as tall as **eight feet**, having **large terminal inflorescence.**
- It has **close resemblance to Curcuma phrayawan**, a species reported from Thailand but is distinguished by having **lemon-yellow rhizomes with a very bitter taste.**
- **Conservation status:** Data Deficient under (IUCN) Red List category.
- Until this discovery, there were 93 recorded Curcuma names as accepted species worldwide.



Blue Flag Certification

- India has 12 Blue Flag Beaches.
- Blue Flag is one of the world's most recognised **voluntary awards for beaches, marinas, and sustainable tourism boats**.
- It is run by the international non-governmental organisation **Foundation for Environmental Education**, headquartered in **Copenhagen, Denmark**.
 - ⊖ It was started in **1985 in France** and has been implemented outside Europe since 2001.
- For the award, high standards in the **four categories of water quality, environmental management, environmental education and safety** must be met.



Project on Station Area Development along Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Transport (Project-SMART)

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) reviewed the progress of Project-SMART.
- Project-SMART envisages **developing surrounding areas of Mumbai - Ahmedabad High Speed Railway (MAHSR) Stations** to enhance accessibility and convenience of commuters & other stakeholders and to promote economic activities in the vicinity of station areas.
- MoHUA and Ministry of Railways have signed an MoU for Technical Cooperation with **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** for developing four model HSR stations.
 - ⊖ Four stations are Sabarmati, Surat in Gujarat and Virar and Thane in Maharashtra.



Seafood nutrients

- According to a study, low-income countries could **lose up to 30% of nutrients from seafood** due to climate change.
 - ⊖ The researchers projected that **seafood-sourced nutrient availability would decrease by about four to seven per cent per degree Celsius warming**.
- **Seafood** is central to diets and has the **potential to combat malnutrition** in low-income countries and Global South.
 - ⊖ Seafood is **low in saturated fat and sodium** and is a rich source of many essential vitamins and minerals.
 - ⊖ Seafood consists of important **nutrients including calcium, iron, protein and omega-3 fatty acids**.



Direct Listing

- **Companies (Amendment) Act 2020 (Section 5)** has been notified by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs
 - ⊖ It amended the Companies Act 2013 and allowed direct listing for certain class of unlisted Companies to directly issue a certain class of securities in foreign stock exchanges.
- **Direct listing** is a process by which a company can go public by selling existing shares instead of offering new ones.
 - ⊖ It facilitates access to global capital.
- Till now, Indian companies can access overseas equity markets only through **depository receipts or by listing their debt securities on foreign markets**.



Carbon nanoflorets

- **Carbon nanoflorets** made by IIT Bombay researchers can convert incident sunlight to heat with 87% efficiency.
- The high efficiency of nanoflorets comes from three properties:
 - ⊖ They absorb three frequencies in sunlight – **infrared, visible light, and ultraviolet**.
 - ⊖ **Shape of carbon cones** ensure that very little light is reflected back
 - ⊖ They didn't easily dissipate the heat generated into the environment.
- These features make nanoflorets a good material to heat other materials, like water, using solar energy.



Integral Field Ultraviolet Spectroscopy Experiment (INFUSE) mission

- INFUSE mission has been launched by **NASA**.
- Mission aims to **spectroscopically image** a region of **Cygnus Loop**, studying shock fronts as material from the supernova interacts with interstellar medium.
- **Cygnus Loop** is the **remnant of a star** that was once 20 times the size of our Sun.
 - ⊖ Some 20,000 years ago, star **collapsed under its own gravity** and erupted into a supernova.
 - ⊖ Supernova is the large explosion of a star.
- It will be the **first far ultraviolet integral field spectrograph (IFS)** in space and will have access to the Lyman ultraviolet.

Places in News



Thailand (Capital: Bangkok)

- Thailand has allowed Visa-free travel for Indians from November 10, 2023 to May 10, 2024.
- **Political boundaries**
 - ⊖ It is a country in Southeast Asia.
 - ⊖ **Neighbors:** Laos and Cambodia (East), Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia (South), Andaman Sea and Myanmar (West).
- **Geographical features**
 - ⊖ **Drainage system:** Two river systems - Chao Phraya and Mekong.
 - ⊖ **Isthmus of Kra** between Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea lies at the narrow neck of southern Myanmar and Thailand.
 - ⊖ **Highest point:** Mount Inthanon.

