



16 March 2024

National and International News

Rajnath Singh Inaugurates Indian Navy's New Headquarters in Delhi



Context:

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Indian Navy's new headquarters, **Nausena Bhawan, in Delhi Cantonment.**
- This marks a significant **milestone as the Indian Navy establishes its first independent headquarters in Delhi**, consolidating its operations previously spread across 13 different locations.

Key points:

- It is equipped with a **state-of-the-art integrated building management system** for efficient coordination and monitoring of security services and utility systems.
- Nausena Bhawan has achieved **Green Rating IV under the integrated habitability assessment.**

National Speed Breeding Crop Facility



Context:

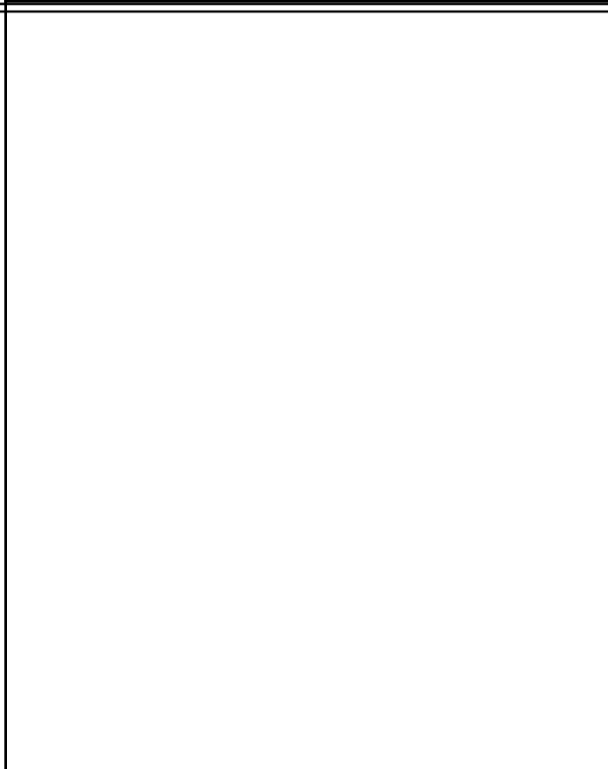
- The Union Minister of Science & Technology recently inaugurated the pioneering "**National Speed Breeding Crop Facility**" at the prestigious **National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI) in Mohali.**

Key points:

- The facility is dedicated to **developing new varieties of crops like wheat, rice, soybean, pea, and tomato.**
- It achieves over four crop generations annually through a meticulously controlled environment.
- The **primary aim is to assist agricultural and biotechnology researchers in enhancing crop varieties, aiding plant breeders, and supporting farmers in adopting high-yielding and nutritionally rich varieties.**
- The facility is **particularly significant for North Indian States like Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, and the UT of J&K.**
- NABI's technology facilitates the development of **climate-resistant crops, freeing farmers from seasonal limitations.**



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- It enables **year-round farming**, enhancing **food security and economic stability**.

About NABI:

- NABI is India's **first Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute, established on February 18, 2010**.
- It aims to transform the agri-food sector in India.
- NABI focuses on **agricultural biotechnology, food, and nutritional biotechnology**.
- It aims to provide innovative solutions for **quality food and nutrition through research**.
- NABI has strong connections with national and international organizations and industries.
- Located in the **agri-food cluster of the "Knowledge City" in Mohali, Punjab, along with neighboring institutes**.
- NABI has contributed significantly to initiatives such as the **'Atal Jai Anusandhan Biotech (UNaTI) Mission,' 'Poshan Abhiyan,'** and the establishment of **Biotech Kisan Hubs in regions like Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana**.

Revamped Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme



Context:

- The Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has introduced the **Revamped Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance (RPTUAS) Scheme**.

Key points:

- **Objective:** Provide subsidies based on **quality reimbursement to aid pharmaceutical companies** in achieving **Revised Schedule M and WHO-GMP certifications**, enhancing **product quality and safety**.

Key features of the scheme:

- **Expanded Eligibility Criteria:** Extends eligibility beyond Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (**MSMEs**) to encompass any pharmaceutical manufacturing unit with a **turnover of less than 500 crores, facilitating technology and quality upgradation**.
- **Flexible Financing Options:** Introduces more flexible financing, emphasizing subsidies on a reimbursement basis rather than traditional credit-linked approaches.
- **Comprehensive Support for Compliance:** Aligned with revised Schedule-M and WHO-GMP standards, the scheme supports a broader




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	<p>spectrum of technological upgrades.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integration with State Government Schemes: Revised scheme allows integration with state government initiatives, enabling units to benefit from additional top-up assistance. ● New Benefit Limits Based on Turnover: Incentives are determined based on the company's turnover.
<p>PM-SURAJ Portal</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PM unveiled 'Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan and Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan' (PM-SURAJ) national portal online. ● The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched a nationwide initiative aimed at offering credit support to the marginalized segments of society. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a national portal launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide credit support to small entrepreneurs from marginalised communities. ● Small entrepreneurs from marginalised communities, including Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes, and sanitation workers, can benefit from the PM-SURAJ Portal. ● The objective of PM-SURAJ Portal is to provide financial assistance directly to beneficiaries, eliminate middlemen and commissions, and empower marginalised communities economically and socially. ● PM-SURAJ Portal aims to uplift marginalised communities and integrate them into the mainstream economy, which is essential for achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.
<p>Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Union Minister Piyush Goyal Joins Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Virtual Ministerial Meeting. <p>Key points: The four pillars of IPEF are (1) Trade; (2) Supply Chains; (3) Clean Energy, Decarbonization, and Infrastructure; and (4) Tax and Anti-Corruption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The IPEF is not an FTA. ● India actively participates in the IPEF but not




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	<p>across all pillars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India has opted out of the trade pillar due to misalignment with its trade policies. <p>About IPEF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPEF was launched in May 2022, bringing together 14 regional partners – Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam – in a new model of economic cooperation. IPEF negotiations began in late 2022. In May 2023, the IPEF partners announced the substantial conclusion of the negotiations for a first-of-its-kind IPEF Supply Chain Agreement. In November 2023, the IPEF partners announced the substantial conclusion of the negotiations on the proposed IPEF Clean Economy and Fair Economy Agreements, as well as on a proposed overarching Agreement on IPEF to help ensure the durability of the framework and held a signing ceremony for the IPEF Supply Chain Agreement.
<p>International Day of Mathematics</p> 	<p>Context: Pi Day, celebrated annually on March 14, honors the mathematical constant pi (π), chosen due to the significance of the date's digits (3/14 mirroring the first three digits of pi).</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives officially recognized Pi Day. UNESCO declared Pi Day as the International Day of Mathematics in November 2019. Origins: Founded by Larry Shaw in 1988 at the Exploratorium in San Francisco.

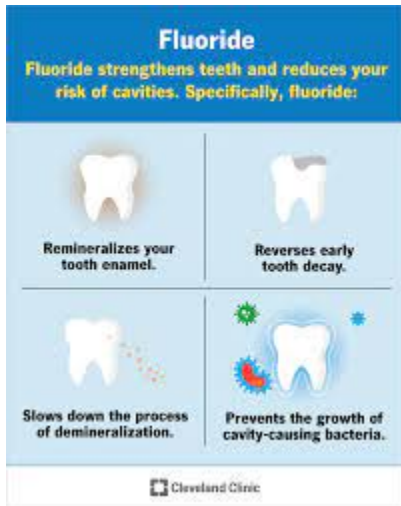


Kerala Regional News

<p>National Vaccination Day</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 16 March 1995, the government of India started the pulse polio Immunization Programme as the first attempt of eradicating the disease from the country. Since then, March 16 has been celebrated as National Vaccination Day. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Vaccination Day aims to raise awareness about the importance of vaccines. It recognizes the life-saving benefits of vaccination in preventing serious diseases. This day encourages people to get vaccinated and stay up-to-date on their immunizations. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vaccination campaign, "Do Boond Zindagi Ki," has targeted children between the ages of 0 and 5, and two drops of the vaccine orally are administered at public health centers. <p>Theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theme for National Vaccination Day 2024 is "Vaccines Work For All"
<p>Agriculture department to open 'Keralagro' premium outlets</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kerala Agriculture Department is launching a series of premium retail outlets called "Keralagro." These stores will focus on selling value-added agricultural products directly from local farmers and state farms. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first outlet is planned for Ulloor in Thiruvananthapuram. The department aims to open outlets in all 14 districts in the first phase. This initiative intends to provide farmers with a better income and consumers with easier access to fresh, nutritious, and safe food products.



Fluoride contamination detected in three districts of Kerala



- The "Keralagro" brand already offers various products online, including processed agricultural goods, plants, and even books on agriculture.

Context:

- According to the State Environment department of Kerala, high levels of fluoride contamination have been found in nine areas across three districts: Palakkad, Malappuram, and Alappuzha.
- The fluoride levels exceed permissible limits, raising concerns about potential health impacts.

Key points:

- Contamination of drinking water with high levels of fluoride can lead to various health problems.
- It causes Dental and Skeletal Fluorosis
- It causes **discoloration and mottling of teeth** in children
- It **weakens bones and joints in adults, potentially leading to pain and stiffness.**
- High fluoride intake may **damage the kidneys, brain, thyroid, and liver.**

Polling held in Thiruvananthapuram for Russian Presidential Polls

Context:

- Thiruvananthapuram facilitated early voting for Russian citizens residing in Kerala for their country's presidential election.
- This took place at the Russian House, the honorary consulate, on March 14th, 2024.
- This **marked the third** time the consulate hosted such an event.

About:

- **Around 60 Russians, including expats and tourists in Kerala, cast their ballots.**
- The **completed ballots will be sent to Moscow via diplomatic channels from Chennai** for counting after the official polling period in Russia concludes on March 17th

World Sleep Day

Context:

- **World Sleep Day is observed on the Friday before the March equinox** (This year it is 15th March)
- It is a global event raising awareness about the importance of sleep.



Key Points:

- It is organized by the World Sleep Day Committee of the World Sleep Society, formerly World Association of Sleep Medicine (WASM)
- The first World Sleep Day was held on 14 March 2008.

Theme:

- The theme for this World Sleep Day is “Sleep Equity for Global Health”
- The day promotes the benefits of adequate sleep and the negative consequences of sleep disorders.
- It aims to educate people about sleep medicine, prevention, and management of sleep problems.

About:

- The March equinox or northward equinox is the equinox on the Earth when the subsolar point appears to leave the Southern Hemisphere and cross the celestial equator, heading northward as seen from Earth.
- The March equinox is known as the vernal equinox (spring equinox) in the Northern Hemisphere and as the autumnal equinox (autumn equinox) or fall equinox in the Southern Hemisphere.

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