

NEWS TODAY

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK: INDIA

- **Remarks were made by India** at the meeting to commemorate the **International day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons** (26 September).
- India **called for a meaningful dialogue among all countries possessing nuclear weapons**, for building trust and confidence and supported immediate **commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)**.
 - FMCT is a proposed international **treaty to prohibit the further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices**. It is being discussed in the **Conference on Disarmament (CD)**.
- India also said it **accords high priority to CD** and **supports the commencement of negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention** at CD.
 - CD was formed in 1979 as the **single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum of the international community**, after agreement was reached among Member States during the first special session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) devoted to disarmament (1978).
- India reiterated its long-standing commitment to **universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament** leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Multilateral treaties for preventing nuclear proliferation and testing, and for promoting progress in nuclear disarmament:

- **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of disarmament.
- **Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in Atmosphere, In Outer Space And Under Water**, also known as the **Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)**.
- **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** that bans all nuclear weapons test explosions. It was signed in 1996 but has yet to enter into force.
- **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)** includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. It was opened for signature in 2017 but has yet to enter into force.
- **Of the above four, India has ratified only PTBT.**

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 42nd GST COUNCIL MEETING

- **Key recommendations are:**
 - GST Compensation Cess levy has been **extended beyond 2022**.
 - GST Compensation Cess seeks to compensate states **for any loss in revenues in first five years of GST implementation (2017- 2022)**.
 - **Taxpayers with turnover more than Rs 5 crores** will have to provide **Harmonised System Nomenclature (HSN) Code** from April 2021.
 - HSN code, developed by World Customs Organization, is an **international nomenclature for the classification** of traded goods for customs purposes.
 - To encourage domestic launching of satellites particularly by young start-ups, the satellite launch services **supplied by ISRO, Antrix Corporation Ltd. and NSIL would be exempted**.
 - **Enhancement in features of return filing** to enhance Ease of Doing Business and improve compliance experience.
- GST Council is a **Constitutional body** under **Article 279A**, providing recommendations to Union and State Government on GST related issues.
 - Council is **chaired by Union Finance Minister** and other members are Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all States.
 - Its **recommendations are binding** and all decisions are taken by 75% majority of members.

INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA MOVE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) ON COVID-19 PREVENTION, TREATMENT

- India and South Africa **sought a waiver on certain provisions that regulate intellectual property rights** to speed up efforts to prevent, treat and contain the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - They said that intellectual property rights are **hindering timely provisioning of affordable medical products** to COVID-19 patients and also the process of the import and export of pharmaceutical products is **cumbersome and lengthy**.
- Also, many countries may **face institutional and legal difficulties when using flexibilities available under TRIPs** (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement.
 - TRIPs Agreement **incorporates certain "flexibilities"** to permit developing and least-developed countries to use TRIPs-compatible norms in a manner that enables them to pursue their own public policies, socio-economic development.
 - E.g. **Compulsory licensing** enables a government authority to license use of a patented invention to a third party or government agency without consent of the patent-holder.
- TRIPs Agreement **establish minimum standards for the availability, scope and use of intellectual property**.
- **Doha declaration on the TRIPs agreement and public health**, adopted by WTO members in 2001 affirms that TRIPs Agreement **does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health**.

NOBEL PRIZE IN MEDICINE FOR DISCOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS

- Since the discovery and identification of the virus in the 1970s and 1980s, a cure has been found for Hepatitis C.
- Viral hepatitis is **inflammatory condition of liver** caused by five known hepatitis viruses — A, B, C, D and E. It is largely preventable.
- **Transmission:** Hepatitis A and E are water-borne diseases and are less severe in nature, while remaining strains are blood-borne and can be fatal if not detected or treated in time.
 - Hepatitis B and C are transmitted through unsafe sexual practices, use of infected syringe, mother-to-child and infected blood transfusion, among others.
- **Symptoms and threats:** Chronic liver condition
- **Treatment:** The infection has no cure, but there is vaccine to prevent hepatitis B. There is no vaccine against hepatitis C, but the infection can be cured with treatment.
- In 2016, WHO committed to eliminating hepatitis as public health threat by 2030.
- Indian government launched **National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP) in 2018** and **set a timeline to eliminate Hepatitis C by 2030**.
 - In India, 4 crore people are suffering from Hepatitis B and 0.6-1.2 crore people from Hepatitis C.

THE NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE 2020



Harvey J. Alter Michael Houghton Charles M. Rice
"for the discovery of Hepatitis C Virus"

DELHI ZOO GENERATED ECOSYSTEM SERVICES WORTH RS 422.76 CRORE IN 2019-20

- Findings are part of a study commissioned by Central Zoo Authority (CZA) to **evaluate the services provided by the zoo.**
 - Study found that almost 77% of the contribution comes from the recreational and cultural services of the zoo.
 - CZA is a statutory body under Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972**, to oversee the functioning of Indian zoos and complement wildlife conservation strategies through ex-situ measures.
- Ecosystem services are the **direct and indirect contributions of the ecosystems to humankind's well-being.**
- Ecosystem services can be categorized into four types:**
 - Provisioning services:** Products obtained from ecosystems such as food, freshwater, fibre, genetic resources, and medicines.
 - Regulating services:** Benefits obtained from regulation of ecosystem processes such as climate regulation, natural hazards regulation, water purification, pollination.
 - Supporting services:** Non-material benefits obtained from ecosystems (e.g. nutrient cycling, soil formation).
 - Cultural services:** Non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems such as spiritual enrichment, intellectual development, recreational activities, and aesthetic values.
- In a related news, government announced that it is working towards the **upgradation and development of 160 Zoos in Public Private Partnership (PPP) across the country.**

ALSO IN NEWS

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) deferred Emission norms for tractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now, next stage of emission norms for tractors (TREM Stage-IV) will be implemented from 1st Oct, 2021. Earlier, MoRTH has proposed amendments to Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate emission norms for Agricultural machinery (agricultural tractors, power tillers and combined harvesters) and Construction Equipment Vehicles (CEV). Change in nomenclature of Bharat Stage (BS) Construction Equipment Vehicle/ Tractor Emission Norms (CEV/TREM)-IV. It was done to avoid confusion between emission norms of other Motor vehicles (having BS as norms) and those for agricultural machinery, CEV and such other equipment.
Translational Health Science And Technology Institute (THSTI) recognized as a Global Bioassay Laboratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) has recognized THSTI, an autonomous institute of Department of Biotechnology, as one of the Global network of Laboratories for centralized assessment of COVID-19 Vaccines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under this, Laboratory will follow a common set of protocols to measure immune response of multiple vaccine candidates. It will harmonize the Vaccine trial process and will speed up the selection of the most effective candidate. CEPI is a global partnership launched in 2017 to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.
Organic Spices Seed parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First two organic seed parks will come up in Gujarat. They aim to encourage capacity building and adoption of best practices in production cumin (jeera) and fennel seeds (saunf). These were sanctioned by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.
Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully flight-tested SMART. It will have a range of over 600 km. SMART is a Torpedo System for Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) operations far beyond Torpedo range. Torpedo is a weapon consisting of a self-propelled, self-guided, cigar-shaped underwater projectile that carries a conventional or nuclear warhead.
Xanthomonas oryzae pv Oryzae (Xoo infection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, scientists at Centre for Plant Molecular Biology Hyderabad, uncovered the mechanism by which bacterium Xoo interacts with rice plant and cause disease. Xoo causes a serious bacterial leaf blight disease in rice. It causes huge yield losses to rice cultivation throughout the world. Treatment of rice with cellulase, a cell wall degrading enzyme secreted by Xoo, induces rice immune responses and protects rice from subsequent infections by Xoo.
Shyamji Krishna Varma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister paid tribute to freedom fighter Shyamji Krishna Varma on his birth anniversary. Shyamji Krishna Varma founded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Home Rule Society (IHRS) in London in 1905 that to promote the cause of self-rule in British India. India House - student residence in London between 1905 and 1910 to promote nationalist views among Indian students in Britain. Indian Sociologist a monthly journal to outlet nationalist ideas.
Trans fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans fats are unsaturated fats and can be naturally-occurring or Artificially produced when hydrogen is added to liquid vegetable oils. They are used in edible products as it has longer shelf life. Harmful effects: Obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, insulin resistance, infertility etc. WHO recommended Trans fatty acids (TFA) to be less than 1% of total energy intake. It has called for the total elimination of TFA in global food supply by 2023. FSSAI has proposed to limit TFA limit in foods to 2% and eliminate Trans fats from foods by 2022.

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