

## WHO latest data states more than 1 billion people living with Mental Health Disorders

WHO's two latest reports - **World mental health today** and **Mental Health Atlas 2024** - highlight the **widespread global burden of mental health conditions**, affecting over a billion people and incurring substantial economic costs.

### Key Highlights of the Reports

- **Growing Prevalence:** In 2021, **14% of the global population** were estimated to be living with a mental disorder.
- **Most Common Disorders:** Anxiety and depressive disorders account for more than two-thirds of all mental health conditions.
- **Gender Disparities:** Females are estimated to more often experience anxiety, depressive, and eating disorders.
- **Youth Vulnerability:** Nearly half of mental disorders begin before the age of 18 years.
- **Critical Gaps in Mental Health Systems:** Insufficient investment (median government spending - 2% of Health Budget), severe shortage of mental healthcare workers, poor treatment coverage, etc.

### Consequences of Mental Disorders

- **Suicide Crisis:** In 2021, Suicide was the second leading cause of death in 15–29-year-old females; and the third leading cause of death in males in this age group.
- **Informal Care Burden:** Mental health conditions account for one of the highest annual costs of informal care, placing significant social, economic, and emotional burdens on family members and other informal carers.
- **Economic Consequences:** Economic burden of mental health conditions is estimated to be between 0.5% - 1.0% of GDP in several countries.

### Initiatives Taken to Promote Mental Health

#### India

- **Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States** (Tele- MANAS).
- **Manodarpan:** To provide psychosocial support to students during COVID-19 and beyond.
- **National Mental Health Programme:** To ensure availability and accessibility of minimum mental healthcare for all.

#### Global

- **Paro Declaration:** To provide universal Access to People-centred Mental Health Care and Services.
- **Mental Health Gap Action Programme** by WHO to scale up services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders.

## APEDA launches BHARATI to support Agri Food Startups and boost India's agri Food Export

The initiative aligns with the government's **Atmanirbhar Bharat and Startup India** visions, enhancing India's global Agri-food trade presence.

### About BHARATI

- It stands for **Bharat's Hub for Agritech, Resilience, Advancement and Incubation for Export Enablement**.
- **Key Objectives:**
  - ⊕ It aims to support **100 agri-food startups**, and achieve **\$50 billion in exports by 2030**.
    - ◆ Selected startups will undergo a 3 month acceleration programme on product development, export readiness, regulatory compliance, market access, etc.
  - ⊕ **Attract startups working on advanced technologies:** E.g., AI-based quality control, Blockchain-enabled traceability, IoT-enabled cold chains and Agri-fintech.
  - ⊕ **Drive Innovation in high-value categories:** E.g., GI-tagged agri-products, Organic foods, Superfoods, Novel processed Indian agri-foods, Livestock products, AYUSH products
  - ⊕ **Resolve export challenges:** E.g., related to product development, value addition, quality assurance, perishability, wastage and logistics.

### Role of Agri-startups in Enhancing Agri-export

- **Streamlined Supply Chains:** Address post-harvest losses through **demand-driven cold chains**, warehouse monitoring, and market linkages, crucial for maintaining product quality for international markets.
- **Quality Optimization:** Provide farmers with quality inputs and technical guidance, ensuring higher yields and export-ready produce.
- **Enhanced Processing & Traceability:** Strengthen organized food processing, enable traceability, and streamline operations to raise farmer income and export competitiveness.
- **Technology Integration:** Use Big Data and IoT for precision farming, pest management, and weather forecasting, ensuring consistent, high-quality export ready crops.
- **Market Linkages:** Innovations in **market linkage models** align crop production with consumer demand, ensuring timely and efficient fulfillment of export orders.

Agri-startups are instrumental in transforming India's agriculture **from subsistence to profit-driven enterprises**, significantly impacting agricultural exports.

## Anti-immigration rallies held across Australia targeting Indians

The "March for Australia" protests have been condemned by Australian Members of Parliament, exemplifying rising anti-immigration sentiment in the Global North.

- **Indians are Australia's second-largest migrant group** after the UK. As of June 2023, approximately 840,000 Indian-born residents lived in Australia.

### Reasons for Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Global North

- **Securitization of Migration:** Migration framed as a **national and cultural security threat** prompting **tighter borders and restrictive policies**. Many people fear that high numbers of immigrants cause them to no longer "feel at home" in their own countries. **E.g. Brexit campaign.**
- **Economic Protectionism:** **Perceived strain on resources** and fear that immigrants might **undercut native-born workers by accepting lower wages**, thus putting local citizens out of jobs.
- **Nationalism & Deglobalization:** Rising nationalism and retreat from global interconnectedness prioritize domestic interests over migrant welfare.
  - ⊕ **Right-Wing Populism:** Populist parties weaponize anti-immigrant sentiment, portraying migration as a direct threat to identity and security leading to misleading narratives.
- **Xenophobia & Cultural Violence:** Fear of "otherness" and protection of national identity, reinforced by media narratives and political rhetoric that dehumanize migrants.

### Significance of Diaspora for India

- **Remittances:** India is world's top remittance receiving country Inward flow of remittance. (USD 118.7 billion in 2023-24).
- **Political:** Diplomacy and Lobbying (**E.g. Indo-US civil nuclear deal**).
- **Soft Diplomacy:** Through Indian classical music, dance, festivals, cuisine, Indian films, yoga etc.

### Initiatives Taken for Diaspora

- **Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF):** Aimed at assisting Overseas Indian nationals in times of distress.
- **Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY):** Launched in 2017 to provide an insurance cover of Rs. 10 Lakhs in case of accidental death.

## Government allows Production of Ethanol from Sugarcane Juice, Molasses during ESY 2025-2026




The diversion of sugar to ethanol production will be periodically reviewed **to ensure adequate domestic availability of sugar throughout the year.**

- ⊕ The **National Policy on Biofuels 2018** permits a wider range of raw materials for ethanol production, including sugarcane juice, sugar beet, sweet sorghum, corn, cassava, damaged food grains (wheat, broken rice), rotten potatoes unfit for human consumption.

### What are Biofuels?

- Biofuels are liquid or gaseous fuels primarily produced from **biomass (renewable resources)**.
- They can be used in place of or in blend with, diesel, petrol or other fossil fuels for transport, stationary, portable and other applications. **E.g. Ethanol, Compressed Bio Gas (CBG) etc.**
- Blending of ethanol in petrol is promoted under the **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme**.
  - ⊕ India achieved 20% ethanol blending in petrol.
- **Advantages:-**
  - ⊕ **Cleaner Environment:** One crore litre of E-10 saves around 20,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
  - ⊕ **Reduce Import:** Ethanol blending in petrol resulted in savings of >Rs.1,10,000 crore of foreign exchange in the last 10 years.

### Generations of Biofuel

 Generations	 Sources	 Advantages
<b>First</b>	Edible feedstocks (E.g. wheat, corn, and sugarcane), food-grade rapeseed, soy, or palm oil.	Cost efficient, Simple processes, No intensive pretreatments.
<b>Second</b>	Lignocellulosic biomass and Waste (E.g. <b>Wheat bran, animal fats, Wastes of cooking and frying oil, Jatropha curcas</b> ).	Circular Economy (Use of wastes), bypasses food vs fuel conflict.
<b>Third</b>	<b>Microalgae and Cyanobacteria biomass.</b>	Direct capture of CO <sub>2</sub> , No land use change and reduced fresh water use etc.
<b>Fourth</b>	<b>Genetic engineered microorganisms</b> E.g. Escherichia coli and Saccharomyces cerevisiae.	Higher Yields, Direct use of CO <sub>2</sub> etc.

## India's first 32-bit processor – Vikram3201 – presented to the PM at Semicon India 2025

The nation aims to capture a significant share of the global semiconductor market, with an industry projection of **USD 1 trillion by 2030**, the development highlights the successful transition from policy approvals to initial production.

➤ **SEMICON India 2025**, jointly organised by **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)** and **SEMI**, is a premier platform uniting **global leaders, innovators, academia, policymakers, and entire electronics ecosystem** to shape future of semiconductors in India.

### About Vikram3201 Processor

- It is an **advanced version of the indigenously designed 16-bit VIKRAM1601** microprocessor which has been flying in the **Avionics system of ISRO's** launch vehicles since 2009.
- Fully **"Make-in-India"** 32-bit microprocessor qualified for the **harsh environmental conditions of launch vehicles**.
- **Developed by:** Designed and developed by the **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre of ISRO** in collaboration with the **Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL) in Chandigarh**.
- **Architecture:** It has a **custom Instruction Set Architecture** capable of floating-point computation.

### Government Initiatives for Semiconductor manufacturing in India

- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM):** Approved in 2021, it is the **nodal agency for developing a sustainable and globally competitive semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem** in India.
- **Revamped Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme:** To **develop Indian intellectual property in semiconductor manufacturing**.

## Empowered Women are a Major Foundation of a Developed India: Prime Minister

On the occasion of the launch of **Bihar Rajya Jeevika Nidhi Saakh Sahkari Sangh Limited initiative**, the Prime Minister highlighted the **importance of financial inclusion of women SHGs for women empowerment**.

### About the Initiative

- **Objective:** Empower rural women entrepreneurs in Bihar with easy access to funds at **affordable interest rates**, digitally for **Jeevika** members.

⊖ **Jeevika**, the **Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project (BRLP)** for poverty alleviation supports **Self-help Groups (SHGs)** to promote **rural women entrepreneurship**.

- ⊖ It aims at **reducing dependence on Microfinance Institutions (MFI)** who charge high interest rates.

### Role of SHGs in Women Empowerment

- **Economic empowerment:** SHGs provide a platform for access to **formal credit, employment and income generation**, providing women **agency** in decision-making in her family. E.g., **SHG-Bank Linkage Programme**.
- **Social empowerment:** **Collectivism in SHGs** promotes development of **self-confidence and social capital**, empowering women to tackle **gender biases** in society. SHGs benefit women in **healthcare and child development**. E.g., **Kudumbashree in Kerala**.
- **Political empowerment:** SHGs enable women to **advocate for their rights and interests** and participate in implementation of **policies at grassroots** level. They also empower women for **political participation in leadership roles**.

**Challenges:** Limited financial resources limit scaling of enterprises, regressive household and community attitudes (e.g., resistance from family), monopoly of dominant groups hindering access to equitable benefits, etc.

### Key Initiatives for Women Empowerment via SHGs

- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** and **Lakhpati Didi Initiative:** Enabling 3 crore Lakhpati Didis (SHG members with annual household income of Rupees One Lakh or more).
- **Women Entrepreneurship Platform:** NITI Aayog aggregator platform for access to information and services relevant to women entrepreneurs.
- **Stand Up India and Mudra Yojana for Women/ Mahila Udyami Yojana.**
- **Sanchar Shakti Initiative:** Empower women SHGs by providing access to **ICT-enabled services**.

## Also in News



### Remission

Supreme Court affirmed that individuals sentenced to life imprisonment retain the **constitutional and statutory right to seek remission**.

#### About Remission

- **Definition:** It means **decreasing the period of the sentence** without changing its character.
- **Article 72:** Indian constitution gives the **President power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites, or remissions of punishment, & to suspend or commute sentences**.
  - ⊖ **Article 161** provides similar powers to the Governor for any offence against any law to which the executive power of the State extends.
- **Section 477 BNSS** relates to the State Government's power to remit or commute sentences of persons convicted for the offences linked to the Central Government.



### Global Trade Update by UNCTAD

Trade policy uncertainty (World Policy Uncertainty Index) is emerging as a major drag on the global economy as per UNCTAD global trade update.

#### Major Findings of the Update

- **Trade policy uncertainty is unprecedented and more disruptive than tariffs.**
- Uncertainty causes higher costs, slower growth, and financial instability.
- **Small firms and LDCs are disproportionately vulnerable to policy uncertainty.**
- **Governments use** policy uncertainty as a deliberate strategic tool for leverage.
- Diversifying markets and joining trade agreements build resilience against uncertainty.





## WTO Committee on Safeguards

India sought consultations with the **US** under the **World Trade Organisation's (WTO) safeguard agreement** over 50% tariffs imposed on certain **copper products**.

**About WTO Committee on Safeguards**

- The **Committee on Safeguards** provides **WTO members** the opportunity to **discuss** any matters relating to the operation of the **Agreement on Safeguards**.
  - ⊕ The **Agreement on Safeguards** sets forth the **rules** for application of **safeguard measures**.
  - ⊕ **Safeguard measures** are "**emergency**" actions with respect to **increased imports** of particular products, which potentially **threaten to cause serious injury** to the importing Member's domestic industry.
- **Functions:** Monitor/report Agreement implementation to the **Council for Trade in Goods (CTG)**; Assess procedural compliance upon member request and report findings.



## Exercise Maitree

The 14th edition of Exercise **MAITREE-XIV** commenced at Meghalaya, India.

**About Exercise Maitree**

- Instituted in 2006, it is one of the important joint training exercises between **India and Thailand**.
- The joint exercise will focus on **company level counter-terrorist operations** in semi-urban terrain under **Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter**.



## Solow Paradox

- The Solow Paradox, coined by **Nobel Laureate Robert Solow** in **1987**, describes the phenomenon where **extensive use of advanced technology, such as computers, does not result in an expected increase in productivity**.
- Solow famously remarked, "**You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics**".
- However, this original paradox **was resolved in the 1990s**, with industries like banking and retail showing productivity gains from **Information Technology (IT) and process redesigns**.
- Currently, **Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption faces its own version of this paradox**, as many organizations are not seeing anticipated value gains.



## Coconut Development Board

Coconut Development Board launches **Revised Schemes About Coconut Development Board**

- **Overview:** It is a **statutory body** established under the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
- **Genesis:** **1981**
- **Aim:** Integrated development of **coconut cultivation and industry** with focus on productivity increase and product diversification.
- **Offices:** **Headquarters at Kochi** and **Regional Offices** at Bangalore, Chennai, Guwahati and Patna.
- **Functions:** Adopting measures for the development of the coconut industry, imparting technical advice, providing financial assistance, etc.



## Power of Siberia 2 Pipeline

**Russia and China** signed legally binding deal to build **Power of Siberia 2 (PoS 2) gas pipeline**.

**About PoS 2 Pipeline**

- It will transit gas reserves in **Russia's West Siberia** to **northern China via eastern Mongolia**.
- It aims to increase supplies via the existing Power of Siberia pipeline, which runs from Eastern Siberia to China.
- It was formerly known as the **Altai pipeline**.



## Immigration and Foreigners (Exemption) Order, 2025

Union Ministry of Home Affairs notified the **Immigration and Foreigners (Exemption) Order, 2025**, under the **Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025**.

**Key Highlights of the Order**

- **Exemption of Passport/Visa for:**
  - ⊕ Indian armed forces on duty,
  - ⊕ Indian, Nepali, and Bhutanese citizens at specified borders;
  - ⊕ Tibetans with valid registration and special permits;
  - ⊕ Specific religious minorities (**Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians**) from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan who entered by December 31, 2024 (even with invalid documents), and
  - ⊕ Registered Sri Lankan Tamil nationals who took shelter by January 9, 2015.
- **Visa Exemption also Applied to:**
  - ⊕ Foreigners holding diplomatic/official passports (where waived by agreement).
  - ⊕ Those eligible for visa-on-arrival.
  - ⊕ Certain foreign military personnel visiting on naval warship.

## Place in News



## Seychelles (Capital: Victoria)

The First Training Squadron of the Indian Navy reached **Port Victoria, Seychelles** as part of long-range training deployment in the **South West Indian Ocean Region**.

**Political Features**

- It is an **Archipelago** consisting of **155 islands** in the western Indian Ocean, **Northeast of Madagascar**.
- It is the **smallest African country** in terms of both area and population.

**Geographical Features**

- Islands sit atop the **Submarine Mascarene Plateau**.
- It includes **42 granitic and 113 coralline islands (largest- Mahe)**.
- **It is divided into 5 island groups:** Amirantes Group; Southern Coral Group; Alphonse Group; Farquhar Group and Aldabra Group.
- **Terrain:** **Mahe Group** is **volcanic** with narrow coasts and hilly interior; others are relatively flat coral atolls, or elevated reefs.



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