

NEWS TODAY

78th World Health Assembly (WHA) of WHO formally adopted the world's first Pandemic Agreement

It is the **second international legal agreement** negotiated under **Article 19** of the **World Health Organization (WHO) Constitution**, (first being the **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, 2003**).

- As per **Article 19**, WHA (with two-thirds vote) has the authority to adopt conventions/agreements on any matter within its competence.

Key Highlights of the Agreement

- Strengthen Pandemic prevention and surveillance:** As per **International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005**.
 - IHR aims to prevent, control and provide a **public health response** to the **international spread of disease**.
- Global Supply Chain and Logistics Network:** Provide access to **pandemic-related health products** during **public health emergencies of international concern**.
- Sustainable Financing: Coordinating Financial Mechanism** under the IHR to be used for its implementation.
- Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing system (PABS):** A **process** to draft and negotiate PABS through an **Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG)** was launched.
 - The result of this process is to be considered at **WHA next year**.
 - PABS deals with the **rapid and timely sharing of materials** and **sequence information** on pathogens with pandemic potential.
 - Pharmaceutical manufacturers** participating in PABS to provide WHO with **rapid access** to **20%** of real time production of their vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics.
- Enforcement:** Once the **PABS is adopted**, the agreement would be open for **signature and ratification** by states.
 - It would be enforced after **60 ratifications**.

Significance of the Agreement



Global Solidarity: Fill gaps and inequities in **global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response**.



One Health approach: Recognizing **interconnectedness** in the health of **people, animal and environment**.



Whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches: Including coordination with the **Indigenous people and local communities**.

Supreme Court Restores 3-Year Law Practice Rule for subordinate Judicial Services Exam

The three-year-rule was scrapped by the Supreme Court on the recommendation of the **Shetty Commission in 2002**.

- In **1993 SC** held that a **minimum legal practice of three years** was essential to qualify for the subordinate judicial services examination.
- The court observed that the **experience as a lawyer is essential** to enable the Judge to discharge his/her duties and functions efficiently.

Other highlights from the Judgement

- Mandatory one year training** for entry level judicial candidates before presiding over court.
- Practice as a law clerk** will also be counted towards the 3-year requirement.
- Ongoing or already notified recruitment processes** will proceed under existing rules.

Constitutional framework for Subordinate Courts

- According to Article 234 of Constitution**
 - Appointments of persons other than district judges** to the judicial service of a State shall be made by the Governor of the State.
 - Rules for appointment are made by the Governor after consultation with the **State Public Service Commission and with the High Court**.
- According to Article 235**, the **control over district courts and subordinate courts** shall be vested in the High Court of the state.

Supreme Court (SC) expressed concern over the monopolistic practices of E-commerce major

SC appointed an **amicus curiae** for assistance in cases arising out of an **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** order and asked **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** to initiate probe against Flipkart.

- **Amicus curiae** (“friend-of-the-court”) are individuals or groups **not directly involved in a legal case** but have **expertise** to assist Courts in making its decision.

Monopolistic Practices adopted by E-Commerce platforms

- **Exclusive Agreements:** It involves launching a product **only on a specific platform** or where a platform would only list products of a certain brand in a category.
- **Deep Discounts:** Forcing prices to be **lower than costs** leading to **erosion of profitability**.
- **Platform Neutrality:** Leveraging control over the platform in **favour of their preferred vendors** or private label products to the disadvantage of other sellers.
- **Abuse of Dominant Position:** Imposition of **arbitrary terms** in contracts by big platforms creates a situation where **retailers are abused and exploited**.

Laws that restrict Monopolistic Practices

- **The Competition Act, 2002:** Prohibits **anti-competitive agreements**, abuse of **dominant position** by enterprises, and regulates combinations (mergers, amalgamations and acquisitions).
 - ⊕ CCI has been established under this to sustain an enabling competition culture.
- **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020:** Introduced by the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution** to regulate and protect consumers in the e-commerce sector.



Mizoram becomes the first state in India to attain Full Functional Literacy

Mizoram crossed above **95% literacy rate** (98.20% as per PLFS Survey 2023-24) to be considered equivalent to **Full literacy** as defined by **Ministry of Education**.

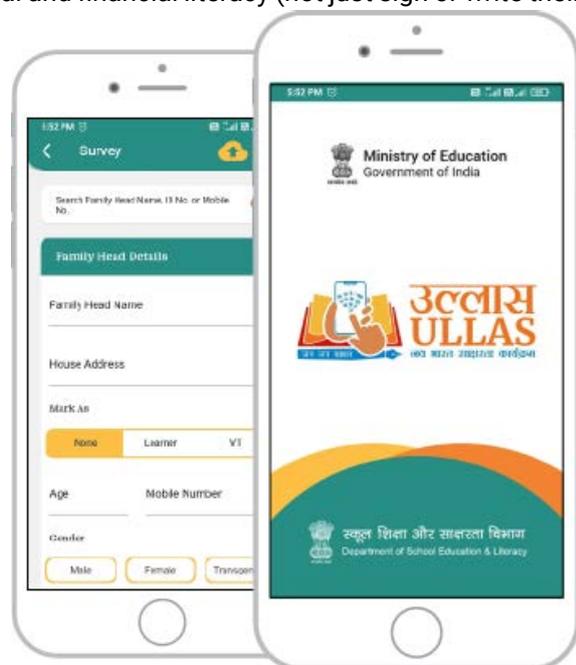
- Earlier, **Ladakh** became the **first administrative unit** to declare full functional literacy under **Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS)**.

About Functional Literacy

- **Meaning:** It refers to the **achievement of reading, writing and numeracy skills** of a **predetermined level**.

About ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram or New India Literacy Programme (NILP)

- **Defined literates:** Learners who can read, write, do basic math, and have digital and financial literacy (not just sign or write their names).
- **Type:** **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** aligning with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
- **Duration:** FY2022-23 to 2026-27.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Education.
- **Target:** Adults **aged 15 and above** from all backgrounds who **missed formal schooling**.
- **Components:** Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Critical Life Skills, Basic Education, Vocational Skills, and Continuing Education.
- **Implementation:** Through **volunteerism**, promoting **social responsibility** and a **sense of duty** or ‘Kartavya Bodh’.
 - ⊕ **Samajik Chetna Kendras** are established by utilizing **available space** in schools, local cultural centres, community halls, etc., with schools acting as the unit of implementation.
- **Use of Regional Languages:** To access **educational content** via the **DIKSHA Portal** and the **ULLAS Mobile App/Portal**.
- **Assessment & Certification:** **FLNAT (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test)** conducted twice a year—or on demand—at local schools.



US President announced the "Golden Dome" missile defence system

The system is inspired by Israel's Iron Dome, but it will include both **surveillance satellites** and **interceptor satellites** to target enemy missiles.

- The project will be headed by a **Space Force general**.

About Golden Dome project

- **Aim:** To create a network of satellites, perhaps numbering in the hundreds, to detect, track and potentially intercept incoming missiles.
 - ⊕ Focussed on to protect the USA from **cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, hypersonic missiles, drones, whether they're conventional or nuclear.**
 - ⊕ It will consist of a **separate fleet of attacking satellites** that would shoot down offensive missiles soon after lift-off.
- **Components:** The system will have different parts like-high-tech detection sensors, tracking tools, interceptor missiles, and command-and-control networks.
 - ⊕ **Each component will operate autonomously** but will exchange information in real time.
- **Concerns:** Russia and China criticised the Golden Dome concept, stating it risked turning space into a "battlefield."
 - ⊕ **Against the spirit of Outer Space Treaty, 1966:** States shall not place nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in orbit or on celestial bodies or station them in outer space.

Other aerial defense systems

Name of system	Country	Specifications
 Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow-2, Arrow-3	Israel	Iron Dome(short range), David's Sling (short to medium and medium to long range, Arrow(long range).
 S-400 Triumph	Russia	Long-range air defence systems.
 The Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD)	U.S.A.	Intercepts ballistic missiles.
 HQ-9 system	China	Inspired by the Russian S-300, offering a 125 km range.



Also In News



Metre Convention

The Department of Consumer Affairs commemorated **World Metrology Day 2025**, marking the **150th anniversary of the Metre Convention**.

About Metre Convention

- **Genesis:** Signed on **20 May 1875**, and amended in 1921.
- **Purpose:** Includes **convention and its annexed regulation** (commonly known as the "Metre Convention") to assure the **international unification and improvement of the metric system**.
 - ⊕ Created an International Organization, **International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM)** to develop and maintain a universal measurement system.
- **Significance:** **International collaboration** in metrology, **global uniformity** of measurements for research, trade, etc.
- **Members:** 64 Member States and 37 Associate States (**India is a member**).



Peptidomimetic Drugs

Researchers from the **Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IASST)**, under the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, have discovered the potential of Peptidomimetic Drugs in treating **Neurodegenerative Diseases (NDs)**.

- NDs are complex diseases characterized by **neuronal loss** and **progressive degeneration** of different areas of the **nervous system**, e.g., Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, etc.

About Peptidomimetic Drugs

- **Meaning:** **Synthetic molecules** that mimic the structure and function of **natural proteins**, particularly neurotrophins, which support the growth and survival of neurons.
- **Significance:** Improved **stability** and **bioavailability** compared to endogenous **neurotrophins**; target specific cells, reduced side effects, etc.



BRICS Energy Ministers' Meet

At the recent BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting held in Brazil, India played a leading role in advocating for inclusive, balanced, and sustainable energy governance.

Key Outcomes of Meeting

- **Reaffirmed support for SDG 7**, focusing on universal energy access, clean cooking, and ending energy poverty.
- Emphasized equitable climate action, guided by technological neutrality and the **CBDR-RC principle** (Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities)
- Stronger global energy partnerships, fair markets, and use of **local currencies** in energy trade
- Upheld each nation's right to choose its **own energy transition** path, promoted efficient energy use, and urged **concessional financing** from developed to developing countries.



Trachoma

India awarded the Certificate of **Elimination of Trachoma** as a Public Health Problem by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**.

- India was declared the **third (after Nepal and Myanmar)** Southeast Asian region country to have eliminated Trachoma in 2024.

About Trachoma

- **Cause:** Eye disease caused by the bacterium **Chlamydia trachomatis**, termed as **Neglected Tropical Disease** by the WHO.
- **Impact: Irreversible blindness.**
 - ⊕ Repeated episodes may cause the eyelashes to be drawn in, rubbing the eye surface causing **permanent corneal damage**.
- **Spread:** Personal contact or through flies.
- **Indian Initiative:** Trachoma control program integrated under the **National Program for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCBVI)** in 1976.



Shirui Lily festival

The Shirui Lily festival returns to Manipur after a two-year pause because of the long-drawn conflict in the state.

About Shirui Lily festival

- Organized by Manipur's Department of Tourism.
- It is named after the Shirui Lily, **Manipur's state flower**, and held annually in Ukhrul district, home to the **Tangkhu Naga community**.
- It honours the delicate and endangered Shirui Lily, which blooms only in the **Shirui Hills**.



Transfats

The World Health Organization (WHO) officially recognised four countries (Austria, Norway, Oman and Singapore) for their outstanding leadership in eliminating industrially produced trans fats.

About Transfats

- Trans fats, also known as **trans-fatty acids (TFA)**, are unsaturated fats present in both industrial and natural sources.
- Industrially produced trans fats are **commonly found in** baked goods like biscuits, fried foods, margarine, and Vanaspati ghee, etc.
- **Trans fat clogs arteries, increasing the risk of heart attacks and deaths.**
- **India enforced** limiting trans fats in oils to no more than 2 per cent through the **Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Second Amendment Regulations, 2021**.



Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Recently, Indonesia, Egypt and Bahrain stalled Pakistan's strong reference against India on the Kashmir issue at the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** Parliamentary Union meeting in Jakarta.

About Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

- **Genesis:** 1969 after the Summit in Rabat, Morocco.
- **Membership:** 57 states (India not a member).
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah (Saudi Arabia).
- **Islamic Summit:** **Highest-level** decision-making body of the Organisation, consisting of the head of the Member States.
- **Aim:** Acts as the **collective voice** of the Muslim world to protect and safeguard their interests.



International Booker Prize

Banu Mushtaq wins International Booker Prize for Kannada short story collection 'Heart Lamp'.

About International Booker Prize

- Launched as Man Booker International Prize in 2005.
- An annual literary prize awarded for a single book that is **Translated into English and Published in the UK or Ireland**.
- **Objective:** To encourage more reading of quality fiction from non-English languages.
 - ⊕ **Promotes global fiction** among English-speaking readers.
- **Genres:** Novels and short story collections.

Personality in News



Prof. Jayant Narlikar (1938–2025)

Prof Jayant Narlikar, astrophysicist who proposed an alternative to Big Bang theory, passes away at 86.

About Jayant Narlikar

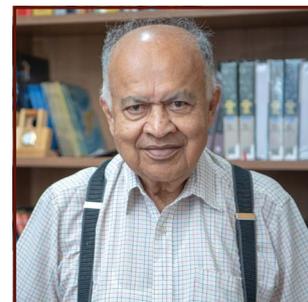
- Born in 1938, in Kolhapur, Maharashtra.
- Completed **B.Sc. at Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** in 1957.

Scientific contribution

- **Pioneering work in cosmology, especially:**
 - ⊕ **Hoyle–Narlikar Theory**, an alternative to the Big Bang model.
- Instrumental in expanding the **Theoretical Astrophysics Group at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)**.
- **Founder-Director, Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA)**.

Awards

- **Kalinga Award by UNESCO**
- **Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan**



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI