

# NEWS TODAY

## WHO released "Hooking the Next Generation: How the Tobacco industry captures young customers" Report

Report was jointly released by World Health Organization (WHO) and STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog to mark World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) on 31<sup>st</sup> May.

➤ **WNTB Theme for 2024:** Protecting children from tobacco industry interference.

### Key findings

- Globally, an estimated **37 million children** aged 13–15 years use tobacco.
- **85% of 15–30-year olds** were exposed to **electronic-cigarette advertising** across multiple media platforms.
  - ⊕ Electronic-cigarettes are **battery-operated devices** that produce aerosol by heating a solution containing nicotine, which is addictive substance in combustible cigarettes.

### Why Tobacco Industry is targeting youth?

- **To find replacement consumers** and generate a lifetime of profits.
- **Lack of understanding** regarding repercussions of smoking and **peer influence** gets them easily addicted to tobacco consumption.

### Tactics used by Tobacco Industry to target youth

- **Releasing new products** like e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products, nicotine pouches etc.
- **Lowering prices of disposable e-cigarettes**, engaging in "buy one, get one free" promotions.
- **Marketing in digital spaces**, including gaming platforms etc.

### Impact of Tobacco Consumption

- **Kills more than 8 million people each year** due to risk of heart disease, lung disorders, cancer etc.
- As per WHO, **smoking costs** world's economies **more than US\$ 1 trillion annually** in healthcare expenditure and **lost productivity**.

### Initiatives taken to control Tobacco Consumption

- **India:** National Tobacco Control Programme, Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act 2003, Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019 etc.
- **Global:** **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, 2003** (India ratified it in 2004), WHO's **MPOWER** measures etc.



**Monitor** tobacco use and prevention policies



**Protect** people from tobacco smoke



**Offer** help to quit tobacco use



**Warn** about the dangers of tobacco



**Enforce** bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship



**Raise** taxes on tobacco

## IIT Madras based Startup Agnikul Cosmos Launched World's First Rocket with single piece 3D-Printed Engine

The **Rocket Agnibaan SOrTeD (SubOrbital Technological Demonstrator)** is India's first semi-cryogenic engine-powered rocket launch flight that was designed and manufactured indigenously through **3-D Printing or additive manufacturing**.

- This test flight aims to **demonstrate in-house and home-grown technologies**, gather crucial flight data and ensure optimal functioning of systems for Agnikul's orbital launch vehicle, the 'Agnibaan'.

### About Agnibaan Rocket

- **Agnibaan is a two-stage rocket** with a capacity to carry payloads ranging from **30kg to 300 kg to a height of 700 km**.
- It can **access both low-and high-inclination orbits** and is completely mobile, designed for accessing more than 10 launch ports.
- It was **launched from India's first privately developed launchpad called 'Dhanush'** established by Agnikul at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

➤ Its **Semi-Cryogenic Engine (SCE)** i.e. **Agnilet** utilizes a propellant combination of **Liquid Oxygen (LOX)** and **Kerosene**.

- ⊕ SCE uses a fuel that is **storable at higher temperatures compared to cryogenic engines**, which makes handling and storage simpler while offering high performance.
  - ◆ Cryogenic engines use **liquid hydrogen as fuel and liquid oxygen as oxidizer** at extremely low temperatures.
- ⊕ ISRO is developing semi-cryogenic propulsion systems for enhancing payload capability of **Launch Vehicle Mark-3** and for future launch vehicles.

### Other Initiatives taken for Privatising Space Sector

- **100% FDI in space sector** is allowed in components and systems/ sub-systems for satellites, ground segment, and user segment.
- **India space policy 2023** suggests that private sector is a critical stakeholder in entire value chain of space economy.
- **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE)** facilitate private sector engagement in space activities.

## UN Global Supply Chain Forum (UN-GSCF) called for resilience amid world trade disruptions

The inaugural edition of the UN-GSCF was hosted by UN Trade and Development (formerly UNCTAD) and Government of Barbados to address escalating disruptions in global supply chains.

- **Supply chain resilience** is the ability of a supply chain network to withstand disruption and minimize the effects of upheaval on revenues, costs and customers.

### Issues affecting supply chains

- **Climate change:** Climate-induced droughts affected trade flow in the Panama Canal.
- **Geopolitical tensions:** Escalating attacks on ships in the Red Sea by Houthis and disruptions in the Black Sea caused by the war in Ukraine.
- **Interdependencies and disruptions:** Vulnerability to various types of disruptions, such as natural disasters, pandemics, etc.
  - ⊕ Complex supply chains create interdependencies, where a disruption at one point can ripple through the entire network, as was witnessed during COVID-19 pandemic.

### Key outcomes of the UN-GSCF

- **Launched Manifesto for intermodal, low-carbon, efficient, and resilient freight transport and logistics:** Emphasizes the urgent need for transforming freight transport to meet global climate targets and enhance socio-economic resilience.
- **Digital solutions for resilience:** Presented guidelines for developing an electronic single window for trade.
- **Launched UNCTAD Trade-and-Transport Dataset:** Developed with the World Bank, to contribute to better understanding and optimizing global trade flows.

### Initiatives taken to boost Supply Chain Resilience in India

#### Global

- **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative:** Launched by Australia, India, and Japan in 2021.
- **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF):** India is a signatory to Pillar-II of IPEF relating to Supply Chain.

#### Domestic

- **Logistics Ecosystem:** PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, the National Logistics Policy (2022), etc.
- **Boost to manufacturing:** Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, introduction of PLI schemes in key sectors, liberalized FDI policy, etc.

## S&P upgrades India's sovereign rating outlook to positive from stable

Credit Rating firm **Standard & Poor's (S&P) Global** has revised credit outlook to positive while retaining sovereign credit rating to 'BBB-' for long-term and 'A-3' for short-term unsolicited foreign and local currency.

- Revised credit outlook is on account of India's robust economic expansion, broad continuity in economic reforms and fiscal policies, prioritization of fiscal consolidation efforts, and improved quality of government expenditure.

### About Sovereign Credit Rating (SCR)

- SCR represent an assessment of a country's or sovereign entity's ability to meet debt obligations, including both capability and willingness to repay debt.
- SCRs are dominated by 3 US-based rating agencies – S&P, Moody's, and Fitch.

### Significance of SCR

- **Borrowing cost:** Higher credit ratings indicate lower risk, allowing countries to borrow at lower interest rates.
- **Access to capital markets:** Higher credit ratings can result in easier access to international capital markets, as investors perceive them as more creditworthy and are more willing to lend to them.
- **Policy implications:** To improve credit ratings, Governments often implement prudent fiscal and economic policies.

### Issues with SCRs

- **Lack of transparency** on methodologies followed by rating agencies.
- **Inadequately capture economy's fundamentals** (ability and willingness to pay).
- Allegations of bias against emerging economies.

### Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs) in India

- In India, CRAs are primarily regulated by SEBI.
  - ⊕ However, certain other regulatory agencies, RBI, IRDA, and PFRDA also regulate certain aspects of CRAs under their respective sectoral jurisdiction.
- **SEBI (Credit Rating Agencies) Regulations, 1999** provides that agencies are required to disclose their rating criteria, methodology, default recognition policy, and guidelines on dealing with conflict of interest.
- **Domestic CRAs registered under SEBI** include CRISIL, ICRA, etc.

## RBI released 'Framework for Recognising Self-Regulatory Organisations for FinTech Sector' (SRO-FT framework)

FinTech are entities that provide **technological solutions** for delivery of financial products to **consumers** or **provide regulatory compliance** in **partnership with traditional financial institutions**.

- FinTech have redefined financial services by **saving time, enhancing access, and lowering costs**. However, they have also raised concerns like **customer protection, data privacy, etc.**
- Therefore, RBI released SRO-FT framework.

### About SRO-FT framework

- SRO is an **industry-led entity responsible** for establishing and enforcing **regulatory standards**, promoting **ethical conduct**, ensuring **market integrity**, among its members.
- **Key highlights**
  - ⊕ SRO-FT to be built on a '**representative**' structure to draw **collective expertise** of its members.
  - ⊕ SRO-FT should be **independent from influence**.
  - ⊕ SRO-FT should **not set up entities / offices overseas** without prior approval of RBI.
  - ⊕ SRO-FT should put in **place systems for managing 'user harm' instances** that **come to its notice** or are referred to it by **RBI or any other stakeholder**.
    - ◆ User harm includes **fraud, unfair practices, unauthorized transactions, etc.**
  - ⊕ SRO-FT should be an **entity domiciled / registered in India**.
  - ⊕ SRO-FT **could have FinTechs companies domiciled outside India as members**.

### Need of SRO-FT

- To adhere to industry **standards and best practices**.
- Empower FTs to **conduct responsibly** even in **absence of formal regulation**.
- Help to **collaborate to identify and address challenges, foster an environment** where **innovation flourishes**.
- To **adapt** to rapid technological advancements and **evolving market dynamics**.
- To usher in **self-discipline**, and imbibe high levels of **internal governance among FTs**.

## Novel method for mass production of Recombinant Proteins

Researchers at Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have developed a **new process for production of recombinant proteins**.

### What are Recombinant Proteins (RPs)?

- These are **modified or manipulated proteins encoded by recombinant DNA (rDNA)** for increasing production of proteins, modifying gene sequences, and manufacturing useful commercial products.
  - ⊕ **rDNA is artificially made DNA strand that is formed by combination** of two or more DNA molecules.
  - ⊕ rDNA technology can be used to **combine (or splice) or transfer DNA from different species or to create genes** with new functions.

### Production of Recombinant Proteins

- RPs such as vaccine antigens, insulin and monoclonal antibodies, are **mass-produced by growing modified bacterial, viral or mammalian cells** in large bioreactors.
  - ⊕ Most widely used organism is **yeast Pichia pastoris** (now called Komagataella phaffii) and it utilizes methanol for production of RP.
  - ⊕ However, methanol is **highly flammable and hazardous**, requiring stringent safety precautions.
- Researchers have now developed an **alternative safer process** that relies on a common food additive called **mono-sodium glutamate (MSG)**.
- **Escherichia coli (E.Coli)** is also one of the organisms of choice for RP production due to its well-characterized genetics, rapid growth, and high yield production.

### Applications of Recombinant Proteins

- **Production of biotherapeutics:** Such as insulin, growth hormones, and monoclonal antibodies.
- **Development of vector vaccines:** Considered safer than traditional vaccines, as they do not contain live pathogens.
- **Agricultural:** Used in development of genetically modified crops, increase nutritional value of animal feed etc.
- **Environmental:** Used in bioremediation (process of using microorganisms to break down pollutants in the environment).

## Also in News



### Nifty EV & New Age Automotive Index

National Stock Exchange of India Indices launches India's first Electric Vehicle (EV) index i.e. Nifty EV & New Age Automotive Index.

#### About Index

- It aims to **track the performance of companies** which form a part of EV ecosystem or are **involved in development of new age automotive vehicles** or related technology.
- Index has a base date of April 02, 2018 and a base value of 1000.
- **Stocks forming a part of the Nifty 500** are eligible to be a part of the index.
- Index will be **reconstituted semi-annually and rebalanced on a quarterly basis**.



### Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

According to RBI, Gross FDI declined marginally to USD 71 billion in 2023-24 from USD 71.4 billion in 2022-23.

- **Net FDI** (i.e., net inward FDI minus net outward FDI) flows **fell to US\$ 10.6 billion** during 2023-24 from US\$ 28.0 billion in 2022-23.
- **Singapore**, followed by Mauritius and USA, is the **largest source of FDI** for India.
- **Highest FDI inflows are in manufacturing sector**, followed by Electricity and Computer Services.

#### About FDI

- It means **investment through capital instruments** by a person resident outside India in an **unlisted Indian company** or in **10% or more** of post issue paid-up equity capital of a **listed Indian company**.



### Rhinoceros

According to new study, **climate change threatens Rhinoceros (Rhinos)** with extinction as they are **vulnerable to increased heating** due to:

- **Lack of high surface area** to dissipate heat.
- **Lack of ability to sweat** as they lack sweat glands.

#### About Rhinos

- **There are 5 species of Rhinos:** Sumatran rhino, Javan rhino, Black rhino, Greater one-horned rhino (found in India), White rhino.
- Rhinos are **'keystone species'** – mega-herbivores that help **shape entire ecosystems** by:
  - ⊕ Geo-forming - reshaping land such as creating natural waterholes.
  - ⊕ Spreading nutrients, seeds and increasing plant biodiversity.



### KAZA Summit

Inaugural edition of **Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) Summit** is being held in Zambia.

#### About KAZA TFCA

- Formally established in 2011.
- It lies in the **Kavango and Zambezi river basins** where **Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe** converge.
- **Okavango Delta** (world's largest inland delta) and **Victoria falls** (a World Heritage Site and one of the seven natural wonders of the world) lie within the region.



### Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH)

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and International Labour Organization announced a strategic partnership to advance skill development and lifelong learning in India.

- A key aspect of partnership is implementation of **Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH)**.

#### About SIDH

- **Unified digital platform**, developed by **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**, to **skill, reskill and upskill Indian individuals** through an online training platform.
- It has a **three-layered framework**:
  - ⊕ **Trust Layer:** Enable verifiable digital skill credentials.
  - ⊕ **Finance/Payment Layer:** Enable payment services like direct beneficiary transfer, rewards, scholarships etc.
  - ⊕ **Discovery Layer:** Facilitate commerce and enable innovation and entrepreneurship.



### Exercise Red Flag 2024

**Indian Air Force** took part in **Red Flag Exercise** in Alaska, USA.

#### About Red Flag Exercise

- It is a **multi-national air combat exercise** designed to create a comprehensive learning environment by simulating realistic combat scenarios.
- **Two distinct Red Flag exercise locations in USA** i.e. Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada and Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska.
- **Nevada exercise** is organized by **US Air Force Warfare Center**, while **Alaska exercise** is managed by **Pacific Air Forces** (air component command of US Indo-Pacific Command).



### Diadromous Fish

Marine Protected Areas designated to protect Diadromous fish species did not align with their core habitats.

#### Diadromous Fish

- These species undergo regular **migration between saltwater and freshwater environments**. Example: Bull Shark, etc.
- They provide **important ecosystem services** by transporting energy and marine-derived nutrients between freshwater and ocean environments.
- They are a species group that includes **both anadromous and catadromous fish**.
  - ⊕ **Anadromous fish:** Live most of their lives in **saltwater** but **breed in freshwater**. Example: Chinook salmon etc.
  - ⊕ **Catadromous fish:** Live most of its life in **freshwater** but **breed in saltwater**. Example: North American eel etc.
- **Threats:** Habitat destruction, barriers to migration (e.g. Dams) etc.



### Bela Block Printing

Traditional craft Bela Block printing is in danger of dying out with no young takers for it.

#### About Bela Block Printing

- It is a traditional **textile art form** that showcases bold and precise designs on **textured fabrics**.
- It is known for its striking **colour combinations and graphic motifs**.
- **Kachchh in Gujarat** remains a significant producer of Bela-style cloth.
- **Khatri community** is known for practicing this craft.

## Places in News



### Moldova (Capital: Chişinău)

U.S. pledges \$135 million aid to Moldova to counter Russian influence.

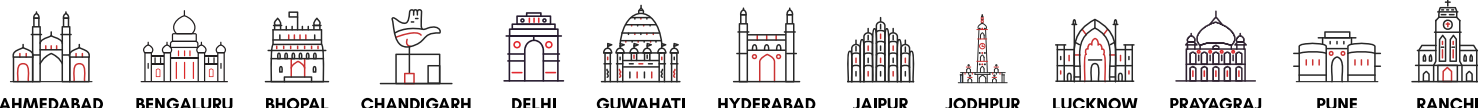
#### Political features

- **Landlocked country** lying in north-eastern corner of **Balkan region** of Europe.
- **Bordering Countries:** **Ukraine** (north, east, and south) and **Romania** (west).

#### Geographical features

- **Highest point:** Mount Bălăneşti.
- **Major Rivers:** Dniester, Prut etc.
- **Climate:** Moderate winters, Warm summers.
- **Natural resources:** Lignite, Phosphorites, Gypsum, Limestone etc.

**Errata:** In 'News Today' dated **19th April, 2024**, in 'Also in News' on "**World Craft City (WCC)**", it was incorrectly mentioned that 'World Crafts Council International (WCCI) is a Kuwait-Based Organisation.'  
The **correct information** is 'The current headquarters for the term (2021-2024) of WCCI is located in Kuwait. However, the Headquarters of WCCI changes according to different terms.'



AHMEDABAD BENGALURU BHOPAL CHANDIGARH DELHI GUWAHATI HYDERABAD JAIPUR JODHPUR LUCKNOW PRAYAGRAJ PUNE RANCHI