



NEWS TODAY

WHO and UNICEF Released 'Mental health of children and young people - Service guidance' Report

The report was released on the occasion of 'World Mental Health Day', celebrated annually on 10 October since 1992, at the initiative of **World Federation for Mental Health**.

➤ **Mental health** refers to a state of **mental well-being** that enables people to cope with **life's stresses, realise their abilities, learn and work well**, and contribute to their community.

Key findings

➤ **One-third of mental health conditions** emerge before the **age of 14** and half before the **age of 18**.

➤ An estimated **15% of adolescents aged 10-19 years experienced mental health conditions** with anxiety, depression and behavioural disorders among the most common,

➤ **Suicide was the fourth leading cause of death** among those aged **15-19 years**,

➤ **Limited access, high costs, and stigma prevent** many youth with mental health concerns from receiving necessary care.

- ⊖ While **public funding and human resources** for services is low worldwide in general, those **aimed at children and adolescents are particularly unavailable**.

India's efforts recognised by the report

- **Mental Health Care Act 2017** decriminalized suicidal behaviours
- **Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF)** in Chennai (Tamil Nadu) provide free care based on international standards for early psychosis services.
- **Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy** (in Maharashtra) has engaged young adults to **co-produce Outlive!**
 - ⊖ It is a **prevention programme targeting urban suicides** among at-risk young people **aged 18-24 years** who are marginalized by caste, class, gender and sexuality

The report called for **phasing out institutional care in favour of community-based services** that allow children to grow in their families and communities, ensuring continuity in their education, social relationships and overall development.

Prime Minister (PM) attended the 19th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Vientiane, Lao PDR

EAS is the **Indo-Pacific's premier forum** for strategic dialogue.

Key Announcement by India

➤ **ASEAN's centrality:** India stressed on ASEAN's centrality in the **Indo-Pacific regional architecture**, in India's Indo-Pacific Vision and in Quad cooperation.

➤ **Education conclave at Nalanda University:** India invited the EAS countries for a **Heads of Higher Education Conclave** to be held at **Nalanda University (Bihar)**.

➤ **Endorsed ASEAN's approach on situation in Myanmar:** India reiterated that Myanmar should be engaged rather than isolated and endorsed ASEAN's **Five-Point Consensus (5PC) which incorporates:**

- ⊖ An immediate end to violence in the country;
- ⊖ Dialogue among all parties;
- ⊖ The appointment of a special envoy;
- ⊖ Humanitarian assistance by ASEAN; and
- ⊖ The special envoy's visit to Myanmar to meet with all parties.

➤ **Called for Code of Conduct (CoC) for Navigation:** While reiterating that maritime activities should be conducted in accordance with United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), India called for developing robust CoC that should **not impose restrictions on the foreign policies of regional countries**.

- ⊖ India emphasized, the region should pursue a **development based approach rather than one pivoted on expansionism**.

About EAS

- **Genesis:** In 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- **Aim:** Promoting **peace, stability, and economic prosperity in East Asia**.
- **18 Participants:** **10 ASEAN Member States, and India, Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and US.**
 - ⊖ **ASEAN Members are:** Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
- **6 priority areas of cooperation:** Environment and energy, education, finance, global health issues and pandemic diseases, natural disaster management, and ASEAN Connectivity.
- **Significance:** EAS members represented approximately 53% of world's population and 60% of global GDP.

Working Paper Co-Authored by Former CEA Arvind Subramanian Raises Concerns Of Multiplying Multi-Plants

Working paper titled 'Multiplying Multi-Plants and Large Plant Size: Consequences, Costs and Rationale' highlights concern about "midgets making widgets" i.e., the growing trend of "multi-plants" in Indian manufacturing.

Key highlights:

➤ "Midgets making widgets" phenomenon

- ⊕ Indian firms are increasingly **setting up multiple factories (multi-plants) in the same state** instead of expanding a single large factory.
- ⊕ Multi-plants **now account for 35% of employment in large firms** (those with over 200 workers).
- ⊕ **Large plants either stagnated or shrunk in the last two decades** despite sharp increase in contract workers.

➤ **Silver lining:** There have been a **series of investments** in which **worker size has been 10,000 and upwards in electronics, apparel and footwear** in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka

- ⊕ This could have been triggered either by **China plus one opportunity or new subsidy schemes**.

Reasons for midgets making widgets

➤ Indian businesses deliberately keep their operations small to **manage the risks and regulatory pressures** (like Industrial Dispute Act, 1947).

- ⊕ For example, in case of a dispute, **shutting down a plant with five hundred employees is less costly than one with five thousand employees**.

Consequences of midgets making widgets

- Multi-plant firms have **lower productivity** than single-plant firms of equivalent size.
- Hence, Indian firms are **losing out to smaller countries like Bangladesh**, which benefits from larger plants in labour-intensive sectors like apparel.
- ⊕ **Bangladesh exports 95% of apparel output**, compared to 37% for India.

Global Hunger Index (GHI), 2024 ranks India under 'serious' category

Index has been released by Irish humanitarian organization Concern Worldwide and German aid agency Welthungerhilfe.

Key findings of report About India:

➤ India ranks **105th out of 127th countries**, falling under "serious" category with **41 other nations, including Pakistan and Afghanistan**.

➤ India's **GHI score has fallen since 2000**, however, **child wasting and stunting** remain very high.

- ⊕ **Maternal malnutrition** perpetuates child under nutrition in India, creating an **intergenerational cycle of poor nutritional status**.

About global hunger index (GHI)

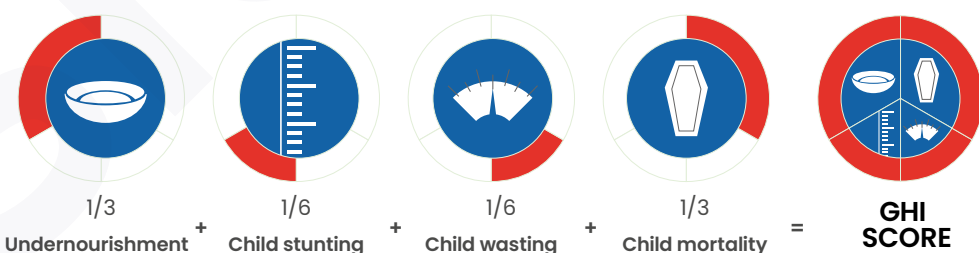
➤ GHI is a **tool designed to measure and track hunger** at global, regional, and national levels.

➤ **Each country's GHI score** is calculated **based on a formula** (See image) that combines **four indicators**:

- ⊕ **Undernourishment** (Insufficient caloric intake); **Child stunting** (Children with low height under age 5); **Child wasting**: (Children with low weight for their height under age 5); **Child mortality**: (Children who die before their fifth birthday).

COMPOSITION OF GHI SCORES AND SEVERITY DESIGNATIONS

Note: All indicator values are standardized.



GHI Severity of Hunger Scale

≤ 9.9 Low	10.0–19.9 Moderate	20.0–34.9 Serious	35.0–49.9 Alarming	≥ 50.0 Extremely alarming
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100-point scale

Key issues of GHI

➤ **Methodology:** Three out of four indicators **used for calculation of index** are related to health of Children and cannot be representative of entire population.

➤ **Faulty indicator:** Studies challenge use of **stunting as an indicator** of under nutrition, showing it occurs in well-nourished populations as well.

➤ **Outdated data set:** Like **National Family Health Surveys** data which **lacks annual updates** for key indicators.

National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India meets WHO international standards for vaccine regulations

India's Vaccine regulatory systems (NRA and affiliated institutions) has been declared "functional" in all key regulatory functions according to WHO's Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT).

- In 2017, India's NRA was assessed with older GBT version V, but now it has been reassessed using updated GBT VI.
 - ⊕ India retained **Maturity Level 3** with highest marks in several functions.
 - ⊕ Maturity Level 3 confirms a **stable, well-functioning and integrated regulatory system**.

About WHO's GBT:

- It is used to **evaluate national regulatory systems for various products** like medicines, vaccines, blood products, and medical devices.
- GBT incorporates **concept of 'maturity level'** on scale of 1 (existence of some elements of regulatory system) to 4 (**Advanced level of performance & continuous improvement**).

National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India:

- **These are institutions engaged in regulation, control and testing of vaccines, responsible for ensuring that vaccines meet international standards of quality, safety and efficacy.**
 - ⊕ Composed of **CDSCO, State Drug Regulatory Authorities, Central Drugs Laboratory, Immunization Division, PvPI** etc.

Regulation of Vaccines in India:

- **Import/manufacturing:** Regulated by Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and related rules.
 - ⊕ Manufacturing license is granted after joint **evaluation by concerned State Licensing Authority & Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)**.
- **New vaccines manufacturing:** New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 outlines requirements for clinical studies and approvals.
- **r-DNA Derived vaccines:** Compliance with **Department of Biotechnology guidelines** is also required.

Centre notifies guidelines for 'Innovative Projects' component under PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has notified operational guidelines to encourage advancements in **rooftop solar technologies, business models, and integration techniques**.

- Earlier guidelines had been issued for other sub-components such as Modal solar village etc.

About 'Innovative Projects' Component

- **Objective:** To support startups, institutions, and industries in piloting new concepts, with a focus on emerging solutions like **blockchain-based peer-to-peer solar trading**, etc.
- **Eligibility/Target Group:** Any entity or individual and International Cooperation (Taking up joint research and design.)
- **Tenure:** Project will have a maximum duration of 18 months.
- **Funds:** ₹500 crore to encourage advancements in rooftop solar technologies,
 - ⊕ **Funding for Projects:** Financial assistance of up to 60% of project cost or ₹30 crore, whichever is lower.
- **Scheme Implementation Agency:** National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE)

About PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (2024)

- **Nodal Ministry:** Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
- **Duration:** Till financial year 2026-27.
- **Objective:** To install rooftop solar (RTS) and provide free electricity for up to 300 monthly units for 1 crore households.
- **Subsidy Benefits:** Provides 60% of the solar unit cost for systems up to 2 kW capacity and 40 % of additional system cost for systems between 2 to 3 kW capacity.

Also in News



Murine Typhus

Recently, a Kerala man was diagnosed with the bacterial disease murine typhus.

About Murine Typhus

- Also known as **endemic typhus, flea-borne typhus or flea-borne spotted fever**.
- **Disease Distribution:** Occurs worldwide, **primarily in tropical and subtropical climates** where rats and rat fleas are present.
- **Caused by:** Flea-borne bacteria *Rickettsia typhi*.
- **Transmission to Humans:** When **infected flea feces** come into contact with cuts or scrapes in skin.
 - ⊕ Transmission can also happen through **exposure of mucous membranes to infected flea feces**.
 - ⊕ Murine typhus is **not spread from one person to another** or from person to fleas.
- **Symptoms:** Include fever, chills, headache, and rash.



Space-Based Surveillance (SBS)

Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has reportedly approved **Phase III of SBS initiative**.

- It will include launching **various AI-powered spy satellites** over five years to improve surveillance.
- It will support the **specific operations and missions of the three-armed services**.

About SBS

- SBS capability is **crucial for monitoring man-made objects in orbit**.
- SBS **operates continuously** regardless of weather, time of day, or atmospheric conditions that can hinder ground-based systems.
- **1st phase of SBS** was launched in 2001 and 2nd phase was **launched in 2013**.

UNICEF

Indian suppliers are **third largest provider** of organization's health and nutrition support to children globally.

About UNICEF:

- **Genesis:** Created in 1946 by UN General Assembly
- **HQ:** New York, USA
- **Mandate:** Advocate for children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.
 - ⊖ It works over **190 countries** and territories to protect the rights of every child.
- It's charged with supporting the Convention **on the Rights of Child**, a **global human rights treaty for children**.
- **Funding:** Entirely funded by voluntary contributions from governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector etc.
- **Publication:** State of World's Children
- In **1965** UNICEF was awarded the **Nobel Prize**.

India-Lao PDR bilateral cooperation

Prime Ministers of India and Lao PDR held bilateral talks on the sideline East Asia Summit.

Key highlights

- **Restoration of Vat Phou UNESCO site** by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- **Three Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation which include:**
 - ⊖ Preservation of heritage of Lao Ramayan;
 - ⊖ Restoration of Wat Pakea Buddhist temple;
 - ⊖ Support to shadow puppetry theatre on Ramayan.
- India will provide a **grant of \$1 million for Lao PDR nutrition security** with food fortification through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, marking its first Southeast Asian project.



Aurora

Auroras were captured at India's highest observatory in Hanle, Ladakh.

About Aurora

- They are Multicoloured lights that appear in the **upper atmosphere (ionosphere)**.
- They are **common occurrences at high northern and southern latitudes**, less frequent at mid-latitudes, and seldom seen near the equator.
- Aurora in **Northern Hemisphere** is called **aurora borealis** and in **Southern Hemisphere** it is called **aurora australis**.
- Caused by the interaction of **solar wind with oxygen and nitrogen gas in atmosphere**.
- They are a spectacular sign that **our planet is electrically connected to the Sun**.

Biopolymer

The Union Minister inaugurated **India's first Demonstration Facility for Biopolymers** at Jejuri in Pune (Maharashtra).

- It is a pioneering effort in developing **indigenously integrated technology for the production of Polylactic Acid (PLA) bioplastic**.

About Biopolymer

- Biopolymers are materials that have been **manufactured from biological sources** like fats, vegetable oils, sugars, etc.
- **Advantages over Synthetic Polymer**
 - ⊖ **Biodegradation:** Decomposition is easily done by bacteria in soil environment.
 - ⊖ **Carbon neutrality:** CO₂ released when biopolymers degrade can be reabsorbed by crops grown to replace them.

Bio Banks

Recently, researchers identified people with an **undiagnosed rare genetic disorder** using data from a **bio bank**.

About Bio banks:

- It is a repository of biological samples, such as **blood, DNA, cells, tissues, and/or organs alongside their genetic data**.
 - ⊖ These samples are **collected from consenting individuals** and intended for **use in research** to store biological data from publicly funded research.
- Previously '**Indian Biological Data Bank**' was set up in 2022 at **Regional Centre for Biotechnology** in Faridabad.
- **Issues with Bio banks:** This includes lack of informed consent, withdrawal rights, privacy, and data protection.
- India's regulation of bio banks is **inconsistent with no law to protect the rights of individuals**.

Nobel Peace Prize

Nobel Peace Prize 2024 has been awarded to **Japanese organization Nihon Hidankyo** for its efforts to achieve a **world free of nuclear weapons**.

- It is a **grassroots movement of atomic bomb survivors** from Hiroshima and Nagasaki

About Nobel Peace Prize

- **Awarded** to those who worked for "**fraternity between nations, for abolition/reduction of standing armies and holding & promotion of peace congresses**".
- In 2017 it was awarded to **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)** for its denuclearisation efforts including ground-breaking efforts for **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** (adopted by UN in 2017).

Dragon Drones

A new type of drone called "dragon drone" has been used in the recent Russia-Ukraine war.

Dragon Drones

- It is a type of **unmanned aerial vehicle** that can release a substance called **thermite** which is a mixture of **aluminum and iron oxide**.
- **Thermite:** When ignited, it produces a **self-sustaining reaction that makes it almost impossible to extinguish**.
 - ⊖ Thermite was used in both the world wars. On humans, it causes severe, **possibly fatal, burns and bone damage**.
- **Thermite isn't banned internationally**, but using incendiary weapons in civilian areas is prohibited by the UN's Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

