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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)



- It is the world's leading intergovernmental organisation for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field.

- The Agency's genesis was U.S. President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1953.
- The IAEA Statute was approved in 1956 and came into force in 1957.
- It is an autonomous organization within the United Nations system.
- Its primary goal is to ensure that nuclear energy is not diverted for weapons purposes.
- The IAEA works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- **Member Countries:** The agency currently has 180 member states, reflecting its wide international mandate and credibility.
- The IAEA is headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and has regional and liaison offices in Toronto, Tokyo, New York, and Geneva.
- **Functions:**
 - **Promoting Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy:** The IAEA encourages the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, emphasizing sustainability and safety.
 - **Safety and Security:** The agency establishes safety standards and provides assistance to ensure that nuclear operations are conducted safely and securely.
 - **Verification:** The IAEA conducts inspections and monitoring to verify compliance with nuclear non-proliferation agreements.
 - The IAEA has no power to force the cooperation of its member states; however, each state can choose to follow or ignore the guidelines set by the IAEA.

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INDIA HAS TO ACT ON ITS 'SUGAR' PROBLEM

- India is facing a growing **public-health crisis** involving childhood **obesity**, diabetes and hypertension.
- Changing lifestyles contribute to this problem, but the increasing availability, affordability and aggressive marketing of foods high in fat, salt and sugar (**HFSS**) are equally important.
- Children are particularly vulnerable because their food choices are influenced by advertising, school environments, pricing and parental perceptions.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has proposed **bold red front-of-pack warning labels** for unhealthy packaged foods.
- This is a welcome step, but labelling alone cannot address the wider food environment.

Rising Burden of Childhood Obesity and Diabetes

- The World Obesity Atlas 2026 estimates that around **41 million Indian children** and adolescents aged 5–19 are overweight or obese.
- The rise in childhood obesity and diabetes demonstrates that unhealthy diets have become a structural health concern rather than merely an issue of individual choice.
- Breakfast cereals, sweetened yoghurt and health drinks are often promoted as nutritious sources of energy and vitamins while their high sugar content receives inadequate attention.

Front-of-Pack Warning Labels: A Necessary Beginning

- A prominent **red warning label** can make nutritional risks immediately visible at the point of purchase.
- Unlike information hidden in fine print, front-of-pack warnings can help consumers identify products containing excessive sugar, salt or fat.
- Awareness doesn't automatically change behaviour. Consumers may continue purchasing unhealthy products because they are **cheap, convenient and heavily marketed**.
- Labelling must therefore be part of a comprehensive regulatory framework.

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The Enforcement Gap in Schools

- Existing recommendations concerning unhealthy food sales have limited impact when compliance remains voluntary.
- School canteens frequently sell inexpensive products that are commercially popular.
- Restrictions should therefore be mandatory, supported by inspections and penalties.

The Unorganised Food Sector: The Missing Half

- Packaged-food regulation has limited reach because a large share of Indians' consumption occurs through street vendors, dhabas, sweet shops and other unorganised businesses.
- India consequently needs a **phased regulatory framework** for the unorganised sector, combining nutritional standards, vendor training, public awareness and practical enforcement.

The Way Forward

- **Sugar Tax as an Economic Instrument**
 - A **tiered sugar tax** could encourage companies to lower sugar content to reduce their tax liability.
 - Such taxation would therefore influence both consumer demand and industry behaviour.
- **Towards a Comprehensive Food Policy**
 - India needs an integrated food-policy framework based on:
 - Mandatory front-of-pack warning labels for HFSS foods.
 - Nutritional standards for school and college canteens.
 - Restrictions on advertising unhealthy foods to children.
 - Regulation of food sales around educational institutions.
 - Gradual regulation of the unorganised food sector.
 - Sugar-content-based taxation encouraging reformulation.
 - Affordable access to healthier foods through targeted subsidies.
 - Stronger inspections and penalties.
 - Nutrition education for parents, children and teachers.
 - Uniform and transparent food standards across markets.

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TURNING ECONOMIC COOPERATION INTO SHARED PROSPERITY

- Ahead of the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi on September 12–13, 2026, Saeed bin Mubarak Al Hajeri, Minister of State at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, outlines how the UAE approaches BRICS.
- Its engagement rests on one simple principle: economic cooperation must create tangible opportunities for countries, businesses and people.
- In a world of growing complexity and uncertainty, the value of international cooperation must be measured by its ability to deliver stability, resilience and shared prosperity.

Diversity as the Strength of BRICS

- BRICS draws strength from its diversity. Its members have different economic structures, resources, capabilities and development experiences. They include:
 - Major producers and consumers
 - Sources of capital and investment destinations
 - Energy exporters
 - Manufacturing centres
- These differences create room for complementarity. Markets, capital, capabilities and ideas can be connected in ways that benefit members and, by extension, the wider Global South.

The UAE's Approach to BRICS

- The UAE became a **full member** of BRICS in January 2024. The UAE's participation in BRICS flows from its broader commitment to multilateralism, constructive dialogue and diversified international partnerships.
- It seeks to build bridges between economies and regions. It supports an open international system that promotes peace, stability, sustainable development and shared prosperity.
- For the UAE, the real value of BRICS lies in implementation. Dialogue must translate into easier trade, stronger investment flows, more resilient supply chains, better connectivity and greater opportunities for businesses.

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Relevance of India's 2026 Chairship

- India's BRICS Chairship is centred on four pillars: **resilience, innovation, cooperation and sustainability**. Analysts see this as a timely framework.
- Trade restrictions, supply-chain disruptions and uncertainty are raising costs for businesses and consumers.
- The right response, as per the experts, is not to retreat from global economic integration but to make it more resilient and inclusive.
- BRICS can deliver tangible benefits in five areas:
 - Strengthening the multilateral trading system
 - Facilitating trade and investment
 - Improving connectivity
 - Supporting resilient global value chains
 - Promoting sustainable development

OPEN WASTE BURNING IN INDIAN CITIES TRIPLES DURING WINTER - WRI STUDY

- Open waste burning refers to the uncontrolled burning of municipal solid waste in the open, on streets, near dumpsites, in vacant plots or at collection points, rather than through regulated disposal or treatment.
- It typically occurs where waste collection is irregular or absent, leaving residents and informal workers to dispose of accumulated garbage by setting it alight.
- The practice releases a mix of pollutants, including **particulate matter** (PM2.5 and PM10), **carbon monoxide, dioxins and furans**, depending on the composition of the waste. Plastics, rubber and treated materials produce particularly toxic emissions.
- Open burning of solid waste is prohibited under the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016**, which place responsibility on urban local bodies for door-to-door collection, segregation and scientific disposal.

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Why This Matters?

- **Public Health**
 - Open burning produces pollutants at breathing height in residential areas, unlike emissions from tall industrial stacks that disperse more widely.
 - Exposure risks include respiratory illness, cardiovascular stress and, in the case of plastic combustion, exposure to carcinogenic compounds.
- **Municipal Governance**
 - The findings point to a service delivery failure rather than merely a behavioural problem. Burning is largely a consequence of waste not being collected.
- **Smaller Cities**
 - Much of India's air quality monitoring and policy attention is concentrated on large metros.
 - The higher burning incidence in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities indicates that pollution management capacity needs to extend well beyond the major urban centres.

Way Forward

- Strengthening waste collection coverage, particularly in underserved and low-income neighbourhoods, addresses the root cause rather than the symptom.
- Enforcing segregation at source reduces the volume of mixed waste that is most likely to be burned and most toxic when it is.
- Expanding processing and disposal capacity so that collected waste has somewhere to go, preventing accumulation at transfer points.
- Targeted monitoring in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, where incidence is highest, but monitoring infrastructure is thinnest.
- Integrating waste burning into winter action plans, recognising localised exposure as a distinct concern from citywide emission averages.
- Supporting informal waste workers, who often handle collection in underserved areas and are among the most exposed to burning emissions.

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WILDLIFE CRIME CONTROL BUREAU (WCCB)



Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)

- It is a **statutory body** established by the Government of India to **combat organized wildlife crime** in the country.
- It was **constituted** under Section 38Y of the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972**. It became **operational** in **2008**.
- It is a **multidisciplinary body** with officials from **Police, Forest, Customs**, and other **intelligence & enforcement agencies**.
- It functions **under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**.
- **Headquarter:**
 - Its headquarters is situated in **New Delhi**.
 - There are **five regional offices** located at **Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bhopal**.
- **Functions:**
 - **Collect and collate intelligence** related to organised wildlife crime activities and **disseminate the same to state and other enforcement agencies** for immediate action so as to apprehend the criminals and to **establish a centralised wildlife crime data bank**.
 - **Coordination of actions** by various officers, state governments, and other authorities in connection with the enforcement of the provisions of this Act, either directly or **through regional and border units set up by the Bureau**.
 - **Implementation of obligations** under various **international conventions** and protocols that are in force at present or which may be ratified or acceded to by India in the future.
 - **Assistance** to concerned **authorities in foreign countries** and concerned **international organisations** to facilitate coordination and universal action for wildlife crime control.

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WHAT IS NARCOLEPSY?



Two researchers who did groundbreaking work on narcolepsy, the neurological disorder that triggers sudden sleep attacks, won a prestigious science award recently.

- Narcolepsy is a **sleep disorder** that causes **extreme daytime sleepiness** and **sudden “sleep attacks”**.
- It affects **brain’s ability to control when one falls asleep** and wakes up.
- Narcolepsy is **uncommon**. But it’s a **manageable lifelong condition**.
- There are **two main types**:
 - **Narcolepsy type 1**: This type causes **sudden muscle weakness (cataplexy)** and/or very low levels of a brain chemical called hypocretin/orexin (helps control wakefulness and rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep).
 - **Narcolepsy type 2**: This type causes **daytime sleepiness** like type 1, but **without cataplexy**.
- A separate condition called **secondary narcolepsy** can happen **due to a brain injury, lesion, or other medical or genetic disorder**
 - It often comes with **more severe symptoms** and longer sleep times.

What Causes Narcolepsy?

- The **exact cause** of narcolepsy is **not known**.
- People with **type 1 narcolepsy** have **low levels of hypocretin**, also called **orexin**. Hypocretin is a **chemical in the brain** that helps control being awake and entering REM sleep.
- **Treatment**:
 - There’s **no cure** for narcolepsy.
 - But **treatment** can help you **manage symptoms** and improve daily life.

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ORV SAGAR MANTHAN



- It is an **indigenous ocean research vessel**.
- It is an **all-weather, multidisciplinary platform**.
- It is designed, engineered, and constructed by **Garden**

Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) for the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR).

- It is constructed under **Vertical-4 (Deep Ocean Survey and Exploration)** of the Government of India's flagship Deep Ocean Mission (DOM).
- It is engineered to **operate in extreme oceanic environments**, including the Southern Ocean, with a **projected service life of 30 years**.

Key Technical & Operational Features:

- **Advanced Equipment:** It is integrated with **dynamic positioning, multibeam bathymetry, multichannel seismic systems, sub-bottom profiling, weather radar, drop keels, and deployment facilities for Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV) and Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUV)**.
- **Research Spectrum:** It will support **multidisciplinary exploration** along the **Indian Ocean mid-oceanic ridges** to identify **multi-metal hydrothermal sulphide mineralisation**, establish environmental baselines, collect upper-air data, and undertake CTD profiling.
- **Dual-Class Certification:** It is built in full compliance with international regulatory standards under **dual-class certification by the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) and the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)**.