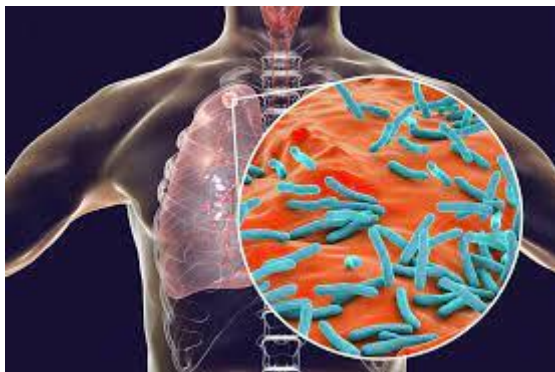


TB Program



- World TB Summit in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh on March 24, 2023, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi instilled fresh energy to the global tuberculosis (TB) elimination response and reiterated India's commitment to spearhead this effort.
- India's National TB Elimination Programme, or the NTEP (previously known as the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme or RNTCP), has introduced several measures to find, notify and treat TB cases, with case notifications rising from 15.6 lakhs in 2014 to over 24 lakhs in 2022.
- Novel approaches including engagement with the private sector, the launch of social support provisions, and the introduction of diagnostic tools and new drug regimens, have improved TB management.
- However, while these efforts have been commendable, the lack of widespread awareness about the disease and lack of access to quality care continues to be a challenge.
- It is also heartening to see the establishment of centers of excellence, which will facilitate collaboration between the Indian Council of Medical Research laboratories and the private sector.
- It is possible, therefore, to strengthen and expand research and development efforts for TB, and to develop new tools that will help India (and other developing countries) meet the End TB targets.
- First, for any infectious disease, a vaccine is what makes elimination possible.
- We do have the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine for TB, but it does not adequately protect adolescents and adults who are at the highest risk for developing and spreading TB.
- Second, testing for, and diagnosing TB needs to become more accessible and affordable so much so that each person with suggestive symptoms or frontline worker can test and get results within minutes, at minimal costs.
- Point-of-Care Tests (POCTs), such as home-based tests for COVID, allowed decentralized, rapid, and

low-cost diagnostics to provide results within minutes.

- Third, the development and introduction of new therapeutic molecules can play a crucial role in the long run.
- While we continue to invest in drug discovery, we must also scale up newer and more effective regimens and also dip into our armory to re-purpose existing drugs for TB.
- Finally, part of the process of strengthening the innovation ecosystem also involves creating regulatory and policy frameworks that smoothen the rollout of proven tools to reach people with as little delay as possible.
- This requires greater collaboration: not just between policymakers, scientists, product developers, and clinical researchers across the country and even across regions, but potentially even between governments.



THE HINDU

LCA

- Against the sanctioned strength of 42 fighter squadrons, the IAF today is at 31 squadrons. The bulk of the left to arrest the drawdown and ensure that the number doesn't fall below 29 squadrons rests on the 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) MK1A, LCA-MK2, and MRFA.
- India has an ambitious plan lined up for the acquisition of over 500 fighter jets, a bulk of them to be indigenously designed and manufactured, with a majority of them being for the IAF. However, these are at various stages of development and procurement.
- The LCA which is the fulcrum of the indigenous jet development program, originally intended as a Mig-21 replacement, has seen a series of delays and has now come back on track. The LCA achieved Initial Operation Clearance (IOC) in December 2013 and Final Operational Clearance (FOC) in February 2019.
- The IAF had earlier signed two contracts with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), for 20 IOC configuration aircraft including four IOC trainers on March 31, 2006, and for 20 FOC configuration jets along with four trainers on December 23, 2010.

- On this, the IAF representative noted that they were supposed to get the 40 LCA from HAL much earlier but they are getting them now.

THE HINDU

UNICEF REPORT-The State of the World's Children 2023: For Every Child, Vaccination

- Only China, India, and Mexico, that is three out of the 55 countries studied for popular perception of the importance of vaccines for children, showed improvement as per data collected by The Vaccine Confidence Project (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) and published by UNICEF on Thursday.
- This is when vaccine confidence marks a decline in over a third of the studied countries, including the Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Ghana, Senegal, and Japan after the start of the pandemic.
- The report warns of the growing threat of vaccine hesitancy due to factors such as misleading information and declining trust in vaccine efficacy. UNICEF India today released the agency's global flagship report 'The State of the World's Children 2023: For Every Child, Vaccination,' highlighting the

significance of childhood immunization.

- The decline in vaccine confidence globally comes amid the largest sustained backslide in childhood immunization in 30 years, fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE HINDU

SCO and Disaster management

- India assumed the presidency of the SCO in 2022. The bloc comprises eight member states: China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Pakistan attended the meeting virtually.
- The SCO would probably be the largest regional organization in the world, representing 40% of the global population, 25% of the global GDP, and 22% of the world's total land area.
- India believes that no hazard is small or big, and it does not leave anyone behind, Mr. Shah said, adding that India now has more accurate and timely early warning systems for drought, floods, lightning, heat waves, cold waves and cyclones.
- "The forecast not only warns us about the disaster but also predicts the potential impact it is likely to cause.

- At the time of a natural disaster, it is of great importance how quickly the relief reaches the affected area,”
 - Noting that the India led Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) has 39 members from across the world.
 - The Tsunami Early Warning System for the Indian Ocean Rim countries established by the Indian National Centre for Oceanic Information Services serves not just India but nearly two dozen other countries.
 - India has organized two knowledge-sharing workshops for SCO members on mitigating the impacts of earthquakes and floods.
 - The Minister identified five major areas for the SCO to work on: confidence-building efforts in Asia, collective responsibility approach, expanding cooperation in communication and information sharing, identification of priority areas, and the use of newly developed technology in disaster resilience capacity building.
- be addressed through the teachings of the Buddha.
 - Buddha preached abandoning war, defeat, and victory for eternal peace. A better and stable world could be achieved only by considering the nations dealing with a scarcity of resources.
 - “It is the need of the hour that the priority of every person and nation should be the interest of the world, along with the interest of the country.
 - Each person was affecting the earth in one way or the other, be it with lifestyle, eating, or traveling habits.
 - “The path of Buddha is the path of the future and the path of sustainability. Had the world followed Buddha’s teachings, it would not have faced the problem of climate change.
 - First Buddhist global summit
 - The Ministry of Culture in collaboration with its grantee body International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) will be hosting the Global Buddhist Summit (GBS) on 20-21 April at the Ashok Hotel.
 - He also said that the central government is organizing several events, and commemorations under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, and the Central government has decided that the first International Global

THE HINDU

First global Buddhist summit

- The world was facing the most challenging times of the century due to war, economic crisis, terrorism, and climate change, and all these contemporary global challenges can

Buddhist Summit will be organized in India.

THE HINDU

Starship Rocket



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- Starship, the most powerful rocket ever built, exploded during its first flight on Thursday, but Elon Musk congratulated his SpaceX team on an “exciting” test of the spacecraft designed to send astronauts to the moon, Mars, and beyond.
- The unscrewed rocket disintegrated minutes after successfully blasting off at 8.33 a.m. Central Time (7.03 p.m. IST) from Starbase, the SpaceX spaceport in Boca Chica, Texas
- NASA has picked the Starship spacecraft to ferry astronauts to the Moon in late 2025 a mission known as Artemis III for the first time since the Apollo programme ended in 1972.

THE HINDU
