

SHORTNEWS

1. AUTISM

NEWS: The US Health Secretary has announced **a testing and research effort to identify the environmental toxins** behind the growing cases of autism.

About Autism

- Autism, also referred to as **autism spectrum disorder** constitutes a diverse group of **conditions related to development of the brain.**
 - It is a developmental condition involving **persistent challenges with social communication, restricted interests and repetitive behavior.**
- **Co-occurring Conditions:** People with autism often also suffer from **epilepsy, depression, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.**
- **Epidemiology:** It is estimated that worldwide about **1 in 100 children has autism.**
- **Probable Cause:**
 - **Genetic Factors:** People with certain specific genetic conditions such as **Fragile X Syndrome and Tuberous Sclerosis** are at increased risk for being diagnosed with autism
 - **Other Factors:**
 - Parents being **older at the time of pregnancy is additionally linked** with greater risk of autism.
- **Initiatives to promote Awareness:**
 - **World Autism Awareness Day:** Celebrated **annually on April 2nd** aims to promote awareness, early diagnosis, and intervention for individuals with autism.
 - **Global Movement Beyond Awareness:** To actively promote **acceptance, appreciation, and inclusion, recognizing** the contributions of autistic people.
 - **Awareness Programs:** Organizations **like NIEPvD organize awareness programs with cultural performances,** and informative sessions on government schemes.
 - **Samagra Shiksha Scheme:** The Indian government **funded Samagra Shiksha scheme provides essential therapy** and learning support for children with autism spectrum disorder.

2. AMRIT BHARAT RAILWAY STATIONS

NEWS: Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated 103 Amrit Bharat Railway Stations via video conference from Bikaner, Rajasthan.

Key Highlights of the Initiatives

- Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), **over 1,300 railway stations are being renovated** to enhance **passenger facilities.**

- **One of the significant features** of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is that the **designs of redeveloped station buildings are inspired by local culture, heritage and architecture.**
- **For e.g.** the **Ahmedabad station** draws inspiration from the **Modhera Sun Temple**, while **Dwarka station** is inspired by the **Dwarkadheesh Temple.**

About The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

- The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is a **railway modernization initiative** launched in February 2023 by Indian Railways.
- **Key features**
 - **Accessibility:** Enhanced facilities for Divyangjans (persons with disabilities), including ramps, tactile maps, and accessible toilets
 - **One Station One Product':** local products and traditional products are shown at station kiosks which promote regional culture and local artisans.
 - **Urban Integration:** Linkage of railway station to metro and buses will make stations better connected to the city.
 - **Modernisation:** Enhance passenger experience by **modernizing railway stations.**

3. ALGERIA ADMITTED AS MEMBER OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK (NDB)

NEWS: The New Development Bank (NDB) has admitted Algeria as a new member recently.

About The New Development Bank (NDB)

- NDB is a **multilateral development bank** aimed at mobilising resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects **in BRICS and other EMDs.**
- **Parent Organisation: BRICS**
- **Establishment:** It was established in **2015, at the 6th BRICS Summit at Fortaleza, Brazil** for financing development projects in the group's member countries.
- **Headquarters: Shanghai, China.**
- **Equal Vote:** Each participant country is **assigned one vote, and none of the countries has a veto power.**
- **Membership: NDB currently has 9 members** including the 5 BRICS nations **plus Bangladesh, UAE, Egypt and Algeria.**
 - **The NDB has an observer status at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).**
- **Presidency:** Both the presidency and vice-presidency **are rotated among BRICS founding members.**
- **Major Projects Funded by NDB in India:**

- **Mumbai Urban Transport Project-3A-II; Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project; Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System.**

4. THREE DIGITAL INITIATIVES TO STREAMLINE PDS

NEWS: Recently, the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has launched three digital initiatives — the **Depot Darpan Portal**, and **digital platforms Anna Mitra**, and **Anna Sahayata** to streamline **India's Public Distribution System (PDS)**.

About the Three Digital Initiatives

- **Depot Darpan Initiative:**
 - **Objective:** Enhance **transparency**, **efficiency**, and **infrastructure** at food grain depots.
 - **Key Features:**
 - **Self-assessment & Monitoring** portal for depot officials.
 - Assigns a **Composite Rating** based on:
 - **Operational parameters:** occupancy, profitability, storage efficiency.
 - **Infrastructure parameters:** safety, sustainability, statutory compliance.
 - Uses **IoT sensors**, **CCTV**, and **live analytics** for real-time monitoring.
 - Targets **₹275 crore** in Food Corporation of India (FCI) savings and **₹140 crore** income boost in CWC depots.
 - **Grading system:** 60% operational, 40% infrastructure performance.
- **Anna Mitra Initiatives**
 - **Objective:** Empower field-level **stakeholders** in the Public Distribution System (PDS).
 - **Key Features:**
 - For **FPS Dealers:** stock view, sales reports, alerts.
 - For **DFSO Officers:** monitor FPS performance, manage grievances, access data.
 - For **Food Inspectors:** geo-tagged inspections, verify stock distribution, FPS ratings.
 - Available in **Hindi & English**.
 - Pilot launched in **Assam, Uttarakhand, Tripura, and Punjab**.
- **Anna Sahayata Initiative:**

- **Objective:** Provide advanced, accessible grievance redressal for Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).
- **Key Features:**
 - Utilizes WhatsApp, IVRS, and Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) for filing complaints.
 - Built for accessibility, speed, and multilingual reach.
 - Pilot phase in Gujarat, Jharkhand, Telangana, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh in 5 languages.