

13th July 2024

India -Taiwan MRA

In a landmark achievement, India and Taiwan have implemented the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for organic products.

Key Points

- ❖ This is the first bilateral agreement for organic products between the two countries signed during the 9th Working Group on Trade Meeting with Taiwan at New Delhi.
- ❖ It is to be highlighted that the MRA will pave the way for the export of major Indian organic products such as Rice, Processed Food, Green/Black and Herbal Tea and Medicinal plant products to Taiwan.
- ❖ Organic products certified under India's National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) can be sold in Taiwan with the "India Organic" logo.
- ❖ Taiwanese organic products can also be sold in India with the "Taiwan Organic" logo.
- ❖ The mutual recognition will ease the export of organic products by avoiding dual certifications; thus, reducing compliance cost, simplifying compliance requirement by adhering to only one regulation and enhancing trade opportunities in the organic sector.
- ❖ The implementing Agencies for the MRA are **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India and **Agriculture and Food Agency, Ministry of Agriculture (AFA)**, Taiwan.

Colombo Security Conclave

At the 8th Deputy National Security Adviser (DNSA), **Bangladesh** was officially welcomed as the **fifth member** state of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC).

About CSC

- ❖ The **Colombo Security Conclave** was established in **2020**, when India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives agreed to expand the scope of their trilateral meeting on maritime cooperation.
- ❖ Mauritius joined the conclave at the fifth meeting of the grouping in Male in March **2022**.

- ❖ Cooperation under the conclave focuses on five pillars – maritime safety and security, countering terrorism and radicalisation, combating trafficking and transnational organised crime, cyber-security and protection of critical infrastructure, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- ❖ **Member states:** India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Maldives and Bangladesh.
- ❖ **Observer state:** Seychelles is an observer state of the conclave.

Sarus Crane

The population of Sarus cranes in Uttar Pradesh is rising, according to the latest summer census conducted on June 20–21, 2024.

Key Points

- ❖ As per the state forest department, 19,918 Sarus cranes have been counted, an increase of 396 from last year's count.
- ❖ The survey highlighted that the Etawah Forest Division recorded the highest number of Sarus cranes at 3,289, an increase of 500, while the Mau Forest Division spotted six Sarus cranes for the first time in a decade.
- ❖ The summer census witnessed the participation of 10,000 citizens across U.P., for two days.
- ❖ In the U.P. Sarus crane numbers have witnessed a consistent upward trend over the years: from 17,329 in 2021 to 19,188 in 2022, 19,522 in 2023, and 19,918 in 2024.

About Sarus Crane

- ❖ It was named the state bird of Uttar Pradesh (U.P) in July 2015.
- ❖ It is the tallest flying bird in the world standing 152-156 cm tall with a wingspan of 240cm.
- ❖ Adult sarus cranes have gray coloured feathers and body with red coloured head and neck.



- ❖ Their beak is sharp, long and green and there is no difference in colour between males and females though males are usually larger than females.
- ❖ They are Listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and as Vulnerable on IUCN Red List.
- ❖ The main threat to the Sarus crane in India is habitat loss and degradation due to draining the wetland and conversion of land for agriculture.

Heritage Tree Garden

As a part of Vriksharopan Jan Abhiyan-2024, UP Government is launching a Heritage Tree Garden in Prayagraj.

Key Points

- ❖ In the garden to be set up in Soraon tehsil of Prayagraj, a plant, twig or branch propagated from a heritage tree will be mandatorily planted.
- ❖ The remaining plants will be species of local importance, informed officials of the state horticulture department.
- ❖ Approximately six to eight hectares of land will be needed for this initiative.
- ❖ The heritage tree garden in Prayagraj will be part of **11 such gardens being set up across UP in different districts** to raise awareness about the identified heritage trees among the state's residents.
- ❖ These gardens will be created in:
 - Gorakhpur
 - Ayodhya
 - Lucknow
 - Varanasi
 - Meerut
 - Bareilly

- Mathura
 - Sitapur
 - Chitrakoot
 - Mirzapur and
 - Prayagraj
- ❖ In all, 948 heritage trees including Prayagraj's Akshayvat have already been identified across the state through the Heritage Tree Adoption Scheme.

Places in News

<p><i>Mt. Etna and Stromboli Volcano</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Mt Etna and Stromboli volcanoes erupted, sending hot ash and lava into the skies of Sicily. ❖ Stromboli is an island in the Tyrrhenian Sea, off the north coast of Sicily, containing Mount Stromboli, one of the four active volcanoes in Italy. ❖ Mount Etna is an active stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy, in the Metropolitan City of Catania.
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Schemes/Initiatives

<p>GAINS 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ On 10th July 2024, Raksha Rajya Mantri launched “GRSE Accelerated Innovation Nurturing Scheme (GAINS 2024) of Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) in Kolkata. ❖ It is an innovative scheme which seeks solutions to the problems related to the shipyards and promotes technology development using the start-ups created and nurtured in the country.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ It encourages and enables MSMEs and Start-Ups to develop innovative solutions for further technological advancement. ❖ This initiative is in keeping with the 'Make in India' and 'Start-up India' policies of the Government of India.
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Important News- Other States

Karnataka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Karnataka introduced a draft Bill for app-based platforms to provide social security benefits to gig workers and sought public feedback. ❖ The Bill proposes fees on transactions and penalties for non-compliance. It aims to protect workers' rights and ensure basic social security.
Nagaland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Nagaland has been awarded the prestigious 'Best State in Horticulture 2024' at the Agriculture Leadership Conclave held in New Delhi. ❖ The award was presented to the State government by the Agriculture Leadership Awards, recognizing Nagaland's exceptional efforts in advancing horticulture development through innovative programs and policies.

Important News- Worldwide

Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Kathmandu sets itself to host the prestigious South Asian Travel Award 2024 event to be organised in 19th September this year. ❖ The event will gather stakeholders from India, Maldives, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan in the hospitality and tourism sector.
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Important News- Miscellaneous

- ❖ In a landmark partnership, PUMA has joined forces with the Indian Olympics Association as their Official Footwear Partner.
 - PUMA will provide our athletes with podium and travel footwear, along with accessories, designed to maximise their training and comfort during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.
- ❖ Europe's new Ariane 6 rocket successfully blasted off for the first time on 9th July 2024, releasing satellites into orbit and restoring the continent's independent access to space.
- ❖ The government has designated the Ministry of Minority Affairs as the nodal ministry for the Haj Committee, taking over from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

