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Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme (MATES)

Australia has recently come up with a new scheme that allows talented young people from India to work in the country for some time.

- MATES gives **Indian university graduates and early career professionals** a chance to work in Australia for **2 years**.
- This scheme will open for professionals from December this year.
- MATES has been established under the **Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA)**.
- **Eligibility** - It is open to Indian nationals who are aged **30 or younger** at the time of application
 - Have not previously participated in MATES
 - Have proficient English language skills (overall IELTS or equivalent score of at least 6, with a minimum score of 5 for each of the four modules)
 - Have graduated within 2 years from an eligible educational institution at the time of application
 - And hold a qualification (Bachelor's degree or higher) in one of the following;
 - Renewable energy, mining, engineering, Information Communications Technology (ICT), artificial intelligence (AI), financial technology (fintech) and agricultural technology.
- Graduates from the **top 100 universities of India** as per the [National Institutional Ranking Framework \(NIRF\) ranking](#) 2024 will be eligible for this scheme.
- There is **no requirement for sponsorship** by an Australian employer to avail this scheme.
- Visa holders can enter Australia for the first time within 12 months, and they may stay in the country for up to 24 months after that. Multiple entry into Australia are permitted with the visa.
- Participants may extend their period of stay by applying for another visa permitting temporary or permanent residence, provided they meet all eligibility requirements for the visa.

Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA)

- Australia and India entered into a Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA) in 2023.
- It is a bilateral framework that supports and promotes two-way migration and mobility between the two countries, while addressing issues pertaining to illegal and irregular migration.

References

1. [The Indian Express | All about MATES](#)
2. [First Post | What is MATES?](#)

Maori Haka

Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke, the young New Zealand parliamentarian performed the famous 'Ka Mate' haka in Parliament amid a discussion on the bill.

- **Maori** - Maori are a ***Polynesian people*** and are the first peoples of their homeland, New Zealand.
- They called New Zealand as 'Aotearoa' or 'land of the long white cloud'.
- **Maori haka** - It is a ceremonial war dance and a sign of cultural pride, strength, and unity for the Maori people of New Zealand.
- It is a group performance that involves chanting, hand movements, facial gestures, and stamping.
- The haka is usually performed in a uniform manner and ***requires strict discipline.***
- The haka varies by tribal region, and many haka tell the story of significant events in a tribe's history.
- **Purpose**
 - The Haka is performed for a variety of reasons, including:
 - Welcoming guests
 - Acknowledging achievements, occasions, or funerals
 - Expressing solidarity or support for a person or group
 - Symbolizing dedication to people and their values
- The most famous haka is "Ka Mate," which was composed around 1820 by the Māori chief Te Rauparaha.
- It became well known when it was incorporated into the pregame ritual of the All Blacks, New Zealand's national rugby union team.
- Haka may be performed by both men and women, and several varieties of the dance fulfill social functions within Maori culture.
- Now, haka is used as a sign of respect and is performed on important occasions, such as sporting events, weddings, funerals, and Pōwhiri (a traditional welcome).
- The traditional Maori performance of haka is a source of pride for all New Zealanders.

Reference

[Down to Earth | Maori Haka](#)

Finding of a Large Coral

Recently, the Scientists have discovered the world's largest coral near the Pacific Ocean's Solomon Islands.

- **Corals** -Invertebrate animals belonging to a large group of colourful and fascinating animals called Cnidaria.

- Cnidarians exhibit a wide variety of colours, shapes and sizes.
- Each individual coral animal is called a Polyp, and most live in groups of hundreds to thousands of genetically identical polyps that form a 'colony'.
- The colony is formed by a process called budding, which is where the original polyp literally grows copies of itself.
- **Types**
 - **Hard Corals** - It is around 800 known species, also known as the 'Reef Building' corals.
 - **Soft corals** - It include seas fans, sea feathers and sea whips.
 - It does not have the rock-like calcareous skeleton like the others, instead they grow wood-like cores for support and fleshy rinds for protection.

According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, 44% of corals living in warm waters are threatened with extinction.

- **Coral Reefs** - Hard corals extract abundant calcium from surrounding seawater and use this to create a hardened structure for protection and growth.
- Coral reefs are therefore created by millions of tiny polyps forming large carbonate structures.

Recent Findings

- **Mega Coral** - It is ***not a coral reef*** but is a collection of many connected, tiny creatures that together form one organism rather than a reef.
- It is ***made of nearly one billion little polyps***, pulsing with life and colour.
- It has been growing for 300 years or more.
- **Location** - The coral was discovered at the southeastern tip of the Solomon Islands, in an area known as ***the 3 Sisters***.
- **Size** - It measures about 111 feet wide and 104 feet long.
- It was ***3 times bigger*** than the previous record holder coral, a dubbed Big Momma in American Samoa.
- It is longer than a blue whale and thought to be so colossal that it could be seen from space.
- It was spotted during a scientific expedition launched by the National Geographic Pristine Seas Program.

The National Geographic Pristine Seas program works to restore the health and productivity of the ocean and improve the livelihoods of coastal communities by protecting the ocean from overfishing.

References

1. [The ICRI| Largest Coral](#)
2. [The CBS News| Largest Coral](#)

Lesser mealworm Larvae

A new plastic-eating insect, lesser mealworm larvae discovered recently in Kenya.

- Mealworm larvae are ***plastic-eaters*** that are capable of consuming polystyrene.
- **Scientific Name** - *Alphitobius diaperinus*.
- It is also known as litter beetle.

Polystyrene, commonly known as styrofoam, is a plastic material that's widely used in food, electronic and industrial packaging.

- It is a small group of insects and is found ***native to Africa***, can be found in many countries around the world.
- It is the first insect species capable of breaking the polluting plastic down.
- The lesser mealworm is the larval form of the *Alphitobius* darkling beetle.
- The larval period lasts between 8 and 10 weeks.
- It is mostly found in poultry rearing houses which are warm and can offer a constant food supply, ideal conditions for them to grow and reproduce.



- **Recent Findings** - The insects could be eating the polystyrene because it is mostly made up of carbon and hydrogen, which may provide them an energy source.
- The microbes and enzymes produced by lesser mealworms can be used in factories, landfills and cleanup sites for waste management.

References

1. [Down to Earth | Plastic-eating insect](#)
2. [Live Science | Plastic-eating mealworms](#)

'Know Your Medicine (KYM)' app

Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports has recently launched a nationwide appeal, 'Know Your Medicine (KYM)' app.

- **Aim-** To empower athletes with critical information, helping them ***avoid inadvertent***

doping and maintain fair play.

- KYM app helps to eliminate inadvertent doping and contribute to a fair and transparent sporting culture.
- The KYM app is part of **National Anti-Doping Agency** to raise anti-doping awareness and education, equipping athletes with essential information to stay clean.
- The app allows users to easily verify whether a specific medicine or its ingredients contain any substances listed as prohibited by the **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)**.

WADA was established in 1999 as an international independent agency to lead a collaborative worldwide movement for doping-free sport.

- By offering this quick and seamless verification, the KYM app helps athletes to stay informed and uphold integrity of sport, fostering a culture of fair and ethical sportsmanship.
- Its unique features includes image and audio search, enables user to select their sport category and search specific sport related information.

National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)

- It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
- It implements the anti-doping programme in India, in line with the World Anti-doping Code 2021.
- It works in close collaboration with the sport ecosystem to create a dope-free sporting environment in the country.
- NADA India collaborates other national anti-doping organizations to strengthen clean sporting practices, contribute to evolving the guidelines and ensure athletes can compete on a level playing field across the world.

Reference

[PIB | 'Know Your Medicine' App](#)