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News Analysis (18 Jul, 2019)

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Cataract in Women

According to a study, women are 69% more likely to develop cataract than men.

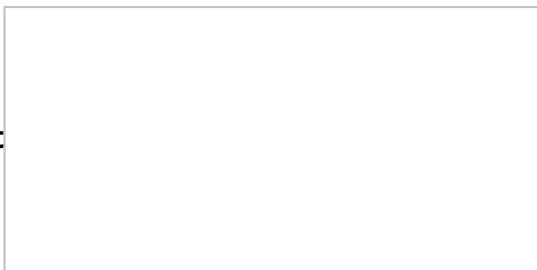
Reasons for this are:

- **Gender disparity-** Women traditionally had poor access to the coverage of medical services, because cataract surgery requires travelling outside the village and due to the social structure and burden of their families, women are less likely to go for eye surgery.
- **Biological factors-** The lack of oestrogen could be the reason for the high prevalence of cataract blindness among women.
Postmenopause, the level of oestrogen decreases, however, the correlation of oestrogen and cataract is not established.

Government Intervention

- National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCB&VI) was launched in the year 1976 as a 100% centrally sponsored scheme with the goal of reducing the prevalence of blindness to 0.3% by 2020.
- NPCB&VI seeks to provide Eye Health for All and prevention of visual impairment
- It envisages comprehensive universal eye-care services and quality service delivery, though its implementation still remains a major issue.

Cataract



- Inside human eyes, there is a natural lens. The lens bends (refracts) light rays that

come into the eye to help us see.

- A person with cataract, this lens becomes cloudy, and vision gets blurry, hazy or less colourful.
- A cataract may be characterised by:
 - Blurry vision
 - Seeing double (when you see two images instead of one)
 - Being extra sensitive to light
 - Having trouble seeing well at night, or needing more light when you read
 - Seeing bright colours as faded or yellow instead

Causes

- Ageing is the most common cause. At the age of 40 years, the normal proteins in the lens start to break down. This is what causes the lens to get cloudy.
- Having certain medical problems, such as diabetes
- An eye injury, eye surgery, or radiation treatments.
- Having spent a lot of time in the sun, especially exposure to damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays
- Using certain medications such as corticosteroids, which may cause early formation of cataracts.

Treatment

Surgery is the only option if vision is totally blocked due to cataract. If not, then symptoms can be treated by remedies like stronger eyeglasses, magnifying lenses, or sunglasses with an anti-glare coating.

Ebola: Global Health Emergency

World Health Organization has announced the Ebola outbreak in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** (a country in Central Africa) as the global health emergency.

- WHO defines a global emergency as an **“extraordinary event”** which constitutes a **risk** to other countries and requires a **coordinated international response**.
- A declaration of a global health emergency brings greater **international attention** and **aid** (both financial and technical) but should not be used to **stigmatise** or **penalise** the people by imposing **travel** or **trade restrictions** as those restrictions actually restrict the **flow of goods** and **health care workers** into affected countries and turn counter-productive.
- It can be noted that recently, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has released a list of **“Ten threats to global health in 2019”** which also included Ebola.

Ebola Outbreak

- The 2014–2016 outbreak in **West Africa** was the largest Ebola outbreak since the virus was first discovered in 1976.
- The outbreak started in Guinea and then moved across land borders to **Sierra Leone** and **Liberia**.
- The current 2018-2019 outbreak in the **Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo** is highly complex.

Ebola Virus Disease

- **Ebola virus disease**, formerly known as **Ebola haemorrhagic fever**, is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human to human transmission.
- **Transmission: Fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family** are natural Ebola virus hosts.
 - **Animal to human transmission:** Ebola is introduced into the human population through close contact with the **blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids** of **infected animals** such as fruit bats, chimpanzees, gorillas, monkeys, forest antelope or porcupines found ill or dead or in the rainforest.
 - **Human-to-human transmission:** Ebola spreads via **direct contact** (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with:
 - **Blood or body fluids** of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola.
 - **Objects** that have been contaminated with **body fluids** (like blood, feces, vomit) from a person sick with Ebola or the body of a person who died from Ebola
- **Symptoms:** symptoms of Ebola can be sudden and include:
 - Fever
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhoea
 - Symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function
 - In some cases, both internal and external bleeding
- **Diagnosis:** It can be difficult to clinically distinguish Ebola from other infectious diseases such as **malaria**, **typhoid fever**, and **meningitis** but confirmation that symptoms are caused by Ebola virus infection are made using the following diagnostic methods:
 - **ELISA** (antibody-capture enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay)
 - **Antigen-capture** detection tests
 - **Serum** neutralization test

- **Reverse transcriptase polymerase** chain reaction (RT-PCR) assay
 - Electron **microscopy**
 - **Virus isolation** by cell culture.
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Seva Bhoj Yojna

The Union **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India has introduced '**Seva Bhoj Yojna**' that seeks to reimburse Central share of **Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST)** and **Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST)** on food/prasad/langar/bhandara offered by charitable religious institutions.

Seva Bhoj Yojna aims to **lessens** the **financial burden** of such charitable religious institutions (such as Temples, Gurudwara, Mosque, Church, Dharmik Ashram, Dargah, Matth, Monasteries etc) that provide food/prasad/langar (**community kitchen**)/bhandara free of cost without any **discrimination** to public/devotees.

Eligibility

- The Charitable religious institutions which have been in existence for at **least three years** before applying for financial assistance/grant.
- Charitable religious institution who serve **free food** to **at least 5000** people in a **month**.
- Institutions need to be covered under **Section 10 of the Income Tax Act** or are registered as a society under the Societies **Registration Act** or as a **Public Trust** under any law for the time being in force of statutory religious bodies constituted under any Act or institutions registered under **Section 12AA of Income Tax Act**.

Under Goods and Services Tax regime, there are three taxes

- **CGST** : Central Goods and Services Tax will be levied (on intra-state supply of goods or services) by the central government and proceeds of the tax will be divided between the state and the centre.
 - **IGST: Integrated Goods and Service Tax** has replaced the previously levied central sales tax and is levied on all inter-state supply of goods or services within India along with export and import of goods or services.
In case of inter-state supply, only IGST will be charged by the central Government and proceeds will be shared between the central and state governments.
 - **SGST**: State Goods and Services tax will be levied on intra state supply of goods or services by the respective state governments.
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Spent Pot Lining

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- Recently, the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** held a hearing regarding scientific disposal of **spent pot lining(SPL)** from the aluminium industries.
 - It has also been classified as a **hazardous waste** under the **Hazardous Waste Management Rules, 2016**.
 - Most SPL is currently stored at the aluminium smelter sites or placed in landfills. Dissolved fluorides and cyanides from SPL **landfill leachate** may have environmental impacts.

Spent Pot Lining

- **Spent Pot Lining** is produced by the smelting plants and contains a high level of **cyanide and fluoride** and is **carcinogenic** in nature and must be scientifically utilised or detoxified. Spent Potlining is also known as spent pot liner and spent cell liner.
- The process of extracting aluminium metal from aluminium oxide takes place in electrolytic cells that are known as pots. The pots are made up of steel shells with two linings, an outer insulating or refractory lining and an inner carbon lining that acts as the cathode of the electrolytic cell.
- During the operation of the cell, substances, including aluminium and fluorides, are absorbed into the cell lining. After some years of operation, the pot lining fails and is removed. The removed material is spent pot lining.
- Hazardous properties of SPL are:
 - Toxic fluoride and cyanide compounds that are leachable in water and are carcinogenic.
 - Corrosive - exhibiting high pH due to alkali metals and oxides.
 - Reactive with water - producing inflammable, toxic and explosive gases.
- The toxic, corrosive and reactive nature of SPL means that particular care must be taken in its handling, transportation and storage.

pH Scale

- The pH is a scale used to specify how acidic or basic a water-based solution is.
- Acidic solutions have a lower pH, while basic solutions have a higher pH.
- The neutral value of the pH depends on the temperature.
- The usual range of pH values runs from 0 to 14, At room temperature (25 °C), pure water is neither acidic nor basic and has a pH of 7.

PATA Gold Award 2019

The Ministry of Tourism's campaign, "**Find the Incredible you**" has been declared the winner of PATA (**Pacific Asia Travel Association**) **Gold Award 2019**.

- It received an award in the “Marketing - Primary Government Destination” category.
- The campaign is a part of its promotional initiatives that are released under the ‘Incredible India’ brand-line in the Television, Print, Digital and Social Media, in key and potential source markets overseas.
- The campaign focuses on digital and social media and the promotion of **Niche Tourism** products of the country.

Niche Tourism

- A ‘niche’ tourism strategy is one that appeals to a small number of people who are especially interested in something. Another way to describe ‘niche’ tourism is ‘specialised’ tourism.
- Examples of niche tourism: Eco & Wildlife Tourism, MICE Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Cruise Tourism, Golf Tourism, Polo Tourism, Medical Tourism, Wellness Tourism etc..

The term "MICE" in the context of travel is an acronym for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. The MICE market refers to a specialized niche of group tourism dedicated to planning, booking, and facilitating conferences, seminars, and other events, which is a big moneymaker in the travel industry.

About PATA

- It was founded in 1951, its headquarters is in Bangkok, Thailand.
- PATA is a **not-for-profit membership association** that acts as a catalyst for the responsible development of travel and tourism to, from and within the Asia Pacific region.
- The Association provides aligned advocacy, insightful research and innovative events to its more than 800 member organisations, including 95 government, state and city tourism bodies, 20 international airlines and airports, 102 hospitality organisations and 70 educational institutions, as well as over a hundred young tourism professional (YTP) members across the world.

Ploonet

- Astronomers have defined a new class of celestial objects called "Ploonets," which are orphaned moons that have escaped the bonds of their planetary parents.
Planet + moon = Ploonet.
- The researchers explain that the angular momentum between the planet and its moon results in the moon escaping the gravitational pull of its parent.
- A new study suggests that the moons of gas-giant exoplanets may break away into their own orbits.
- As the gas giants move inward toward their suns, the orbits of their moons are often

disrupted, according to new computer models.

- The scientists think these objects should exist in solitary orbits around their host stars and could even be discovered in observations from past and present exoplanet-hunting surveys, like **Kepler** and **TESS**.
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New Species of Tree in Tanzania

A new species of a flowering tree named *Mischogyne iddi* (*M iddi*) has been discovered in the Usambara Mountains of Tanzania.

It has been categorised as Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature list.

- With decreased forest areas, they are now threatened by climate change.
- It is unknown what kind of wildlife might rely on the tree.
- The Usambara Mountains, located in tropical East Africa, comprises the easternmost ranges of the Eastern Arc Mountains.
- The discovery of this extremely rare species reaffirms the importance of the Eastern Arc Mountains as one of the most important reservoirs of biodiversity in Africa.

