2023 World Malaria Report

For Prelims: Malaria**,** World Health Organization **,** World Health Assembly**, Vector-Borne Disease**

For Mains: Health, Malaria and its Eradication, Disease Burden in India, Measures to Ensure Good Health Outcomes, Government Initiatives

Source: TH

Why in News?

The **2023 World Malaria Report,** recently released by the **World Health Organization (WHO),** sheds light on the alarming **malaria** situation in India and globally.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Global Malaria Overview:**
    - The 2023 World Malaria Report reveals a global surge with an estimated **249 million cases in 2022, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.**
        - **Covid-19** disruptions, **drug resistance**, humanitarian crises, and **climate change** pose threats to the global malaria response.
    - Twenty-nine countries accounted for 95% of malaria cases globally.
        - Four countries, **Nigeria (27%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (12%), Uganda (5%), and Mozambique (4%),** accounted for almost half of all malaria cases globally.
- **India's Malaria Scenario:**
    - In 2022, **India** accounted for a staggering **66% of malaria cases** in the WHO **South-East Asia Region.**
        - **Plasmodium vivax,** a protozoal parasite, contributed to almost 46% of cases in the region.
    - Despite a **55% reduction in cases since 2015,** India remains a significant contributor to the global malaria burden.
        - India faces challenges, including a surge in cases in 2023 linked to unseasonal rainfall.
    - **India and Indonesia accounted for about 94% of all malaria deaths** in the WHO South-East Asia Region.
- **Regional Impact:**
    - **Africa bears the highest malaria burden,** accounting for 94% of cases and 95% of global malaria deaths in 2022.
    - The WHO South-East Asia Region, including India, managed to contain malaria over the last two decades, with a **77% reduction in cases and deaths since 2000.**
- **Climate Change and Malaria:**
    - Climate change emerges as a major driver, affecting malaria transmission and overall burden.
        - Changing climate conditions enhance the sensitivity of the malaria pathogen and vector, facilitating its spread.

- WHO emphasizes the substantial risk climate change poses to malaria progress, necessitating sustainable and resilient responses.
- **Global Eradication Goals:**
  - WHO aimed to reduce malaria incidence and **mortality rates by 75% in 2025 and 90% in 2030.**
    - The world is off-track, with a **55% gap for 2025 incidence reduction and 53% for fatality rate reduction.**
- **Challenges in Malaria Eradication:**
  - Funding gaps for malaria control increased from USD 2.3 billion in 2018 to USD 3.7 billion in 2022.
  - Research and development funding hit a 15-year low at USD 603 million, raising concerns about innovation and progress.
- **Malaria Vaccine Advancements and Achievements:**
  - The report emphasizes notable progress in malaria prevention through the phased introduction of the **WHO-recommended malaria vaccine,** RTS,S/AS01, in African nations.
    - Rigorous evaluations in Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi reveal a significant **decrease in severe malaria and a 13% reduction in early childhood deaths**, affirming the vaccine's effectiveness.
    - This achievement, combined with existing interventions like bed nets and indoor spraying, forms a comprehensive strategy, leading to improved overall outcomes in these regions.
  - In October 2023, WHO recommended a second safe and effective malaria vaccine, **R21/Matrix-M.**
    - The availability of two malaria vaccines is expected to increase supply and make broad-scale deployment across Africa possible.
- **Call for Action:**
  - WHO emphasizes the need for a substantial pivot in the fight against malaria, calling for increased resources, strengthened political commitment, data-driven strategies, and innovative tools.
  - Sustainable and resilient malaria responses aligning with climate change mitigation efforts are deemed essential for progress.

What is Malaria?

- Malaria is a life-threatening mosquito borne blood disease caused by **plasmodium parasites.**
  - There are 5 Plasmodium parasite species that cause malaria in humans and 2 of these species – **P. falciparum and P. vivax** – pose the greatest threat.
- Malaria is predominantly found in the tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, South America as well as Asia.
- Malaria is spread by the bite of an **infected female Anopheles mosquito.**
  - The **mosquito becomes infected** after biting an infected person. The malaria parasites then enter the bloodstream of the next person the mosquito bites. The parasites travel to the liver, mature, and then infect **red blood cells.**
- Symptoms of malaria include fever and flu-like illness, including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. Notably, **malaria is both preventable and curable.**

What are the Initiatives Related to Malaria?

- **Global:**
  - **WHO's Global Malaria Program(GMP)**:
    - The WHO's GMP is responsible for coordinating WHO's global efforts to control and eliminate malaria.
    - Its work is guided by the **"Global technical strategy for malaria 2016–2030"** adopted by the **World Health Assembly** in May 2015 and updated in 2021.
      - The strategy sets the target of reducing global malaria incidence and

mortality rates by **at least 90% by 2030.**
- ○ **Malaria Elimination Initiative:**
  - Spearheaded by the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation,** this initiative focuses on eradicating malaria through diverse strategies such as treatment accessibility, mosquito population reduction, and technology development.
- ○ **E-2025 Initiative:**
  - The WHO launched the E-2025 initiative **in 2021**. The initiative aims to stop the transmission of malaria in 25 countries by 2025.
  - The WHO has identified **25 countries that have the potential to eradicate malaria by 2025.**
- ■ **India:**
  - ○ **National Framework for Malaria Elimination 2016-2030:**
    - Aligned with WHO's strategy, aims to **eliminate malaria across India by 2030** and maintain malaria-free zones.
  - ○ **National Vector-Borne Disease Control Programme:**
    - Addresses various **vector-borne diseases**, including malaria, through prevention and control measures.
  - ○ **National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP):**
    - To combat devastating effects of Malaria, the NMCP was launched in 1953 built around three key activities - insecticidal residual spray (IRS) with DDT; monitoring and surveillance of cases; and treatment of patients.
  - ○ **High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) Initiative:**
    - Initiated in four states (West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh) in 2019, focusing on malaria reduction through insecticidal net distribution.
  - ○ **Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India):**
    - Established by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR),** collaborates with partners on malaria control research.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Widespread resistance of malarial parasite to drugs like chloroquine has prompted attempts to develop a malarial vaccine to combat malaria. Why is it difficult to develop an effective malaria vaccine? (2010)

(a) Malaria is caused by several species of Plasmodium
(b) Man does not develop immunity to malaria during natural infection
(c) Vaccines can be developed only against bacteria
(d) Man is only an intermediate host and not the definitive host

Ans: (b)

Extending BSF Jurisdiction

For Prelims: Border Security Force (BSF), Chief Justice of India, **Passports Act,1967,** Indian Penal Code (IPC), **Ministry of Home Affairs,** Supreme Court.

For Mains: Impact of extending the **Border Security Force's** jurisdiction on the federal structure and also the internal security of the country.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** clarified that the Centre's notification of 2021, which expands the **Border Security Force's (BSF's)** jurisdiction in Punjab **from 15 to 50 km**, only grants the BSF the authority to act concurrently in preventing specific offenses within these limits and it **does not diminish the investigative authority of the state police.**

- In 2021, the Punjab government moved the Supreme Court challenging the Centre's decision that expanded the BSF's jurisdiction.

What is the Centre's Notification About Extending BSF's Jurisdiction?

- **About :**
    - The notification **replaced a 2014 order under the** BSF Act,1968, which also covered the States of Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya.
        - It also specifically mentioned the two newly created Union Territories- J&K and Ladakh **along with Assam, West Bengal and Punjab.**
    - The violations for which the BSF carries out search and seizure include **smuggling of narcotics, other prohibited items, illegal entry of foreigners and offences punishable under any other Central Act** among others.
    - After a suspect has been detained or a consignment seized within the specified area, the **BSF can only conduct "preliminary questioning"** and has to hand over the suspect to the local police within 24 hours.
        - The BSF **does not have the powers to prosecute crime suspects.**
- **Special Powers of BSF:**
    - In all border states, there is a power under the **BSF Act,1968** to extend the jurisdiction of BSF so far as offences are considered. **Since 1969**, Gujarat has had 80 kms. In some states it was less. **Now it is uniform 50 kms**. And that would merely mean that with regard to some offences **under Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and Passport Act, 1967 etc**, BSF will also have jurisdiction.
        - **Local police will continue to have jurisdiction.** BSF is also concurrently conferred with the jurisdiction.

What are the Different Issues Involved in the Extension of Jurisdiction?

- **Larger Issues:**
    - **Public Order vs Security of State:** Public order and Police which connotes public peace, safety and tranquility, is primarily the responsibility of a **State Government (Entry 1 and Entry 2 of State list respectively).**
        - However, when there is a serious public disorder which threatens **the security or defence of the State or of the country itself (entry 1 of Union list),** the situation becomes a matter of concern for the Union Government also.
    - **Weakening Spirit of Federalism:** Without obtaining the concurrence of the state government, the notification amounts to encroachment on the powers of the states.
        - The Punjab Government has asserted that this notification is Centre's encroachment under the guise of security or development.
    - **Affecting Functioning of BSF:** Policing in the hinterland is not the role of a border guarding force, **rather it would weaken the capacity of the BSF** in discharging its primary duty of guarding the international border.
- **Issues Specific to Punjab:**
    - For 50 km, they have the concurrent power along with the state police to exercise every power over every cognisable offence under **Indian Penal Code (IPC).**
    - When extended from 15 to 50 in a relatively small state like Punjab, all the major cities come under that.
        - So far as other states are considered — **Gujarat and Rajasthan —** Gujarat **has marsh land in a substantial portion.** There it can be reasonable to extend it

because no major urban centres come within it. **Similarly in Rajasthan, there is desert.**

Constitutional Viewpoint on Deployment of Armed forces in States

- Under **Article 355**, the Centre can deploy its forces to protect a state against "external aggression and internal disturbance," **even when the state concerned does not requisition the Centre's assistance** and is reluctant to receive central forces.
- In the case of a state's opposition to the deployment of armed forces of the Union, the right course for the Centre is to first issue directives under Article 355 to the state concerned.
- In the event of the state not complying with the directive of the Central government, the Centre can take further action under **Article 356 (President's Rule).**

What is BSF?

- The BSF was raised in **1965**, after the **India-Pakistan war.**
- It is one of the **seven Central Armed Police Forces** of the Union of India under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
  - Other Central Armed Police Forces are: Assam Rifles (AR), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), National Security Guards (NSG) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
- The 2.65-lakh force is deployed along the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders.
  - It is deployed on Indo-Pakistan International Border, Indo-Bangladesh International Border, **Line of Control (LoC)** along with Indian Army and in **Anti-Naxal Operations.**
- BSF has been defending **Sir Creek** in Arabian Sea and **Sundarban delta** in the **Bay of Bengal** with its state of art fleet of Water Crafts.
- It contributes dedicated services to the **UN peacekeeping Mission** by sending a large contingent of its trained manpower every year.

Way Forward

- **Consent of State is Desirable:** Given the security condition in India's neighbourhood, the existing relationship between the Union armed forces and the State civil authorities do not require any change.
  - However, before the Union Government deploys its armed forces, it is desirable that the State Government should be consulted, wherever feasible.
- **State Becoming Self-Reliant**: Each State Government may work out, in consultation with the Union Government, short term and long-term arrangements for strengthening its Armed Police.
  - The objective will be to become largely self-reliant in the matter of Armed Police so that the assistance of the Union armed forces will be necessary only in cases of very severe disturbances.
- **Regional Arrangement:** A group of neighbouring States may, by consensus, have a standing arrangement for the use of the Armed Police of one another in case of need.
  - The **Zonal Council** would be the best forum for achieving consensus of the States within a zone for devising such an arrangement.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Department of Border Management is a Department of which one of the following Union Ministries? (2008)

(a) Ministry of Defence

(b) Ministry of Home Affairs
(c) Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways
(d) Ministry of Environment and Forests

Ans: (b)

Q1: Analyze the multidimensional challenges posed by external state and non-state actors, to the internal security of India. Also discuss measures required to be taken to combat these threats. **(2021)**

Tejas Jets and Prachand Helicopters

For Prelims: Tejas Jets and Prachand Helicopters, Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (Mark 1A), Prachand Light Combat Helicopters (LCH).

For Mains: Tejas Jets and Prachand Helicopters, Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Source: TH

Why in News?

Recently, the **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** has sanctioned Rs 2.23 lakh crore for the procurement of **97** Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (Mark 1A) and 156 **Prachand Light Combat Helicopters (LCH)**, underscoring India's commitment to bolster its armed forces' combat capabilities.

- The procurement plan aims to source **98% of its total needs from domestic industries**, providing a significant boost to the Indian defense industry in its pursuit of **'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance).**
- The DAC also approved a proposal of the Indian Air Force to upgrade its **Su-30 fighter fleet by state-run aerospace** major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).

What is Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)?

- **About:**
    - The LCA programme was started by the Government of India in 1984 when they established the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) to manage the LCA programme.
- **Features:**
    - Designed to carry a range of air-to-air, air-to-surface, precision-guided, weapons.
    - Air to air refueling capability.
- **Variants of Tejas:**
    - **Tejas Trainer**: 2-seater operational conversion trainer for training air force pilots.
    - **LCA Navy:** Twin- and single-seat carrier-capable for the Indian Navy.
    - **LCA Tejas Navy MK2:** This is phase 2 of the LCA Navy variant.
    - **LCA Tejas Mk-1A:** This is an improvement over the LCA Tejas Mk1 with a higher thrust engine.

What is a Light Combat Helicopter?

- **About:**
    - The LCH is the **only attack helicopter in the world** which can land and take off at an **altitude of 5,000 meters** with a considerable load of weapons and fuel.
    - The helicopter uses radar-absorbing material to lower radar signature and has a **significantly crash-proof structure and landing gear.**
        - A pressurised cabin offers protection from Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) contingencies.
    - The helicopter is equipped with a **countermeasure dispensing system** that protects it from enemy radars or infrared seekers of enemy missiles.
    - LCH is powered by **two French-origin Shakti engines** manufactured by the HAL.
- **Genesis:**
    - It was during the **1999 Kargil war that the need was first felt for a homegrown lightweight assault helicopter** that could hold precision strikes in all Indian battlefield scenarios.
        - This meant a craft that could operate in very hot deserts and also in very cold high altitudes, in counter-insurgency scenarios to full-scale battle conditions.
    - India has been operating sub 3 ton category French-origin legacy helicopters, **Chetak and Cheetah**, made in India by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
        - These single engine machines were, primarily, utility helicopters. Indian forces also operate the Lancer, an armed version of Cheetah.
    - In addition, the Indian Air Force currently operates the **Russian origin Mi-17** and its variants Mi-17 IV and Mi-17 V5, with maximum take-off weight of 13 tonnes, which are to be phased out starting 2028.
    - The government sanctioned the LCH project in October 2006 and HAL was tasked to develop it.
- **Significance:**
    - The LCH has the capabilities of combat roles such as destruction of enemy air defence, counter insurgency warfare, combat search and rescue, anti-tank, and counter surface force operations.

What Different Types of Aircrafts India Has?

- **Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA):**
    - Designed to perform various missions such as **air-to-air combat, air-to-ground attack, and electronic warfare.**
    - IAF pursuing the procurement of 114 MRFA to replace the aging fleet of Soviet-era MiG-21.
    - Procurement will be carried out under the **Make in India initiative.**
    - Selected vendor will have to set up a production line in India and transfer technology to local partners.
- **MiG-21:**
    - Supersonic jet fighter and interceptor aircraft designed by the erstwhile USSR in the 1950s.
        - Widely used combat aircraft in history, with more than 11,000 units built and over 60 countries operating it.
    - IAF acquired its first MiG-21 in 1963 and has since inducted 874 variants of the aircraft
    - Involved in several wars and conflicts involving India. Involved in many accidents and crashes, earning it the nickname **"flying coffin".**
    - **IAF plans to phase out the MiG-21 by 2024** and replace it with more modern fighters.
- **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA):**
    - An Indian program to develop a 5th generation stealth, multirole combat aircraft for the IAF and the Indian Navy.
    - Designed and developed by the ADA of the **DRDO**, in collaboration with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and other public and private partners.
    - Expected to have features such as a **stealth airframe, internal weapons bay, advanced sensors, data fusion, supercruise capability and swing-role performance.**
    - Started in 2008 as a successor to the Sukhoi Su-30MKI
        - First flight planned for 2025 and production is expected to start after 2030.
- **Sukhoi Su-30MKI:**
    - **Twin-engine, two-seat,** multirole fighter aircraft developed by Russia's Sukhoi and built

- under license by India's HAL for the IAF.
        - Designed to perform air superiority, ground attack, electronic warfare, and maritime strike missions
        - Entered service with the IAF in 2002 and has been deployed in several conflicts and exercises
    - **Twin-Engine Deck-Based Fighter (TEDBF):**
        - Manufactured for the Navy to replace the Navy's MiG-29K.
        - First twin-engine aircraft project in India for dedicated carrier-based operations.
        - Equipped predominantly with domestic weapons.
        - Maximum mach number of 1.6, service ceiling of 60,000 feet, maximum takeoff weight of 26 tons, unfolded wing.
    - **Rafale:**
        - **French twin-engine** and multirole fighter aircraft.
        - India procured 36 Rafale jets for Rs 59,000 crore in 2016.
        - Equipped to perform **air supremacy, interdiction, aerial reconnaissance, ground support, in-depth strike, anti-ship strike, and nuclear deterrence missions.**
        - The weapons package of Rafale jets includes **Meteor missile, Scalp cruise missile, and MICA missile system.**
            - Meteor missile is the next generation of Beyond Visual Range air-to-air missile designed to revolutionize air-to-air combat, capable of targeting **enemy aircraft from 150 km away.**
            - SCALP Cruise Missiles **can hit targets 300 km away,** while MICA missile system is a versatile air-to-air missile capable of **hitting targets up to 100 km away.**
        - Flight hour capacity of 30,000 hours in operations.

India Re-elected to International Maritime Organisation Council

Why in News?

Recently, India has been re-elected to the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** Council, marking its continuous service at IMO.

- This re-election, part of the 2024–25 biennium, places India among the Category of **10 states with "the largest interest in international seaborne trade,"** reaffirming its pivotal role in **global maritime affairs.**

What is the International Maritime Organisation?

- **About:**
    - The IMO is a **specialized agency of the** United Nations (UN) that is responsible for **regulating shipping and preventing** marine pollution from ships.
    - IMO was established in 1948 following a UN conference in Geneva and came into existence in 1958.
- **Members:**
    - IMO has 175 Member States and three Associate Members, and its headquarters are in **London, United Kingdom.**
        - **India joined the IMO in 1959.**
- **Role:**
    - Its main role is to create a **regulatory framework** for the shipping industry that is **fair and effective, universally adopted** and universally implemented.

- It is also involved in **legal matters,** including **liability** and **compensation issues** and the **facilitation of international maritime traffic.**
- IMO celebrates **World Maritime Day** every last Thursday of September, to highlight the importance of shipping and maritime activities.
  - **Structure of IMO:**
    - IMO is governed by an **assembly of members,** which meets every two years, and a **council of 40 members,** which is elected by the assembly for a two-year period.
      - The Assembly is the highest Governing Body of the IMO.
    - The **IMO Council, being the executive organ,** is responsible for supervising the organization's work, especially in maritime safety and pollution prevention.
    - IMO's work is conducted through five committees and several subcommittees, which develop and adopt international conventions, codes, resolutions, and guidelines.
  - **India and IMO:**
    - India maintains to be in **Category B of IMO Council,** highlighting its consistent **commitment to maritime affairs.**
    - **India's Vision 2030** aims to enhance **representation at IMO** by appointing permanent representatives at IMO London.
    - The **Amrit Kaal Vision 2047** outlines goals to strengthen India's global maritime presence.
      - Initiatives include establishing a dedicated IMO cell, appointing a permanent representative at IMO headquarters, and implementing the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** Master Plan.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to 'Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)', consider the following statements: (2015)

1. It was established very recently in response to incidents of piracy and accidents of oil spills.
2. It is an alliance meant for maritime security only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

India's Elevated Role in Codex Alimentarius Commission

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Recently, India has been unanimously elected as a **member** representing the Asian region in the **Executive Committee of** Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) during its **46th meeting at** Food and Agriculture organization (FAO) **headquarters at Rome.**

- India proposed the establishment of global standards for **millets** like **Finger millet**, **Barnyard millet, Kodo millet, Proso millet, and Little millet,** similar to group standards set for pulses. This proposal gained unanimous endorsement during the session.
- Codex currently has standards for **Sorghum and Pearl Millet.**

What is Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)?

- **About:**
  - **CAC** is an international food standards body established jointly by the **FAO and the** World Health Organization (WHO) in May 1963 with the objective of **protecting consumer's health and ensuring fair practices in food trade.**
- **Recognition:**
  - The **Agreement on Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) of the** World Trade Organization (WTO) recognizes **Codex standards,** guidelines and recommendations as reference standards for international trade and trade dispute settlement.
- **Members:**
  - Currently the **Codex Alimentarius Commission has 189 Codex Members** made up of **188 Member Countries and 1 Member Organization (The** European Union**).**
    - India became the member of Codex Alimentarius in 1964.
- **Codex Standards:**
  - **General Standards, Guidelines and Codes of Practice:** These core Codex texts typically deal with **hygienic practice, labeling, contaminants, additives, inspection & certification, nutrition and residues of veterinary drugs and pesticides** and apply horizontally to products and product categories.
  - **Commodity Standards:** Codex commodity standards refer to a **specific product** although increasingly Codex now develops standards for food groups.
  - **Regional Standards**: Standards developed by the **respective Regional Coordinating Committees**, applicable to the respective regions.

Note

The Agreement on Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) entered into force with the **establishment of the World Trade Organization on 1 January 1995.** The SPS Agreement concerns the application of food safety and animal and plant health regulations. It aligns with international standards set by **Codex Alimentarius, the World Organization for Animal Health, and the International Plant Protection Convention.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. As regards the use of international food safety standards as reference point for the dispute settlements, which one of the following does WTO collaborate with? (2010)

(a) Codex Alimentarius Commission
(b) International Federation of Standards Users
(c) International Organization for Standardization
(d) World Standards Cooperation

Ans: (a)

World AIDS Day 2023

Why in News?

Every year on 1st December, **World AIDS Day** is commemorated globally to raise awareness about Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and honor those who have succumbed to it.

- World Aids Day was first observed in 1988 when the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** recognised the day.
- The theme for World AIDS Day 2023 is **'Let communities lead.'**

What is HIV/AIDS Disease?

- **About:**
    - Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is an infection that attacks the body's immune system.
        - AIDS is the late stage of HIV infection that occurs when the body's immune system is badly damaged because of the virus.
    - HIV attacks **CD4, a type of** White Blood Cell **(T cells)** in the body's immune system.
        - T cells are those cells that move around the body detecting anomalies and infections in cells.
    - After entering the body, **HIV multiplies itself and destroys CD4 cells,** thus severely damaging the human immune system. Once this virus enters the body, it can never be removed.
    - The CD4 count of a person infected with HIV reduces significantly. In a healthy body, CD4 count is between 500- 1600, but in an infected body, it can go as low as 200.
- **Transmission:**
    - HIV can spread through multiple sources, by coming in direct contact with certain body fluids from a person infected with HIV, who has a detectable viral load. It can be blood, semen, rectal fluid, vaginal fluid or breast milk.
- **Symptoms:**
    - Once HIV converts into AIDS then it may present in initial symptoms like **unexplained fatigue, fever, sores around genitals or neck, pneumonia etc.**
- **Prevalence of HIV AIDS:**
    - It is estimated that **globally 39 million persons are living with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).**
    - In India the figure is 2.4 million.
    - There were 1.3 million new HIV infections in 2022 globally and 63,000 in India.
        - In 2022, 650,000 persons died due to these conditions globally. In India, AIDS caused 42,000 deaths. Many of these **opportunistic infections are preventable and treatable.**

What are the India's Efforts to Prevent HIV?

- **HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017:** According to this act, the central and state governments shall take measures to prevent the spread of HIV or AIDS.
- **Access to ART:**
    - India has made **Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)** affordable and accessible to over 90 per cent of people living with HIV in the world.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):**
    - The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare signed a MoU with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2019 for enhanced HIV/AIDS outreach and to reduce the incidence of social stigma and discrimination against victims of drug abuse and Children and People Living with HIV/AIDS.
- **Project Sunrise:**

- **Project Sunrise** was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016, to tackle the rising HIV prevalence in north-eastern states in India, especially among people injecting drugs.
  - **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP):**
    - Offering PrEP medications to individuals at high risk of contracting HIV can significantly reduce the chances of infection when taken consistently.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Which of the following diseases can be transmitted from one person to another through tattooing? (2013)

1. Chikungunya
2. Hepatitis B
3. HIV-AIDS

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Recently, the President of India has paid tributes to **Dr. Rajendra Prasad**, the first President of India on his birth anniversary.

Who Was Dr. Rajendra Prasad?

- Dr. Rajendra Prasad was born in Zeradei, Siwan, Bihar on 3rd December 1884.
- He was associated with **Mahatma Gandhi** during the **Champaran Satyagraha** (1917) in Bihar.
- Dr. Prasad reacted strongly to the **Rowlatt Act of 1918** and the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919.**
  - He called for **non-cooperation** in Bihar as part of **Gandhi's** non-cooperation movement.
- Played a significant role in the **Salt Satyagraha** in Bihar in 1930, leading to his imprisonment.
- He officially **joined the** Indian National Congress **in 1911**, during its annual session held in Calcutta.
  - Joined the Interim Government in 1946 as the Minister of Food and Agriculture. and gave the slogan of "Grow More Food".
- He served as the first President of India from January 26, 1950, when the country adopted its **constitution**, until May 13, 1962, holding the record for the longest-serving President.

- On January 26, 1950, he was elected India's First President. His tenure as the President for over 12 years makes him the **longest-serving President** in the history of India.
- Dr. Prasad was awarded the Bharat Ratna **in 1962.** He authored several books, including **"Satyagraha at Champaran," "India Divided," and his autobiography "Atmakatha."**
- Passed away on February 28, 1963.

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UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2010)

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad persuaded Mahatma Gandhi to come to Champaran to investigate the problem of peasants.
2. Acharya J.B. Kriplani was one of Mahatma Gandhi's colleagues in his Champaran investigation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

MAHASAGAR Initiative

Recently, the first session of **MAHASAGAR**, the Indian Navy's **initiative**, brought together maritime leaders from diverse nations within the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Theme:** 'Collective Maritime Approach towards Countering Common Challenges'

- MAHASAGAR stands for **Maritime Heads for Active Security And Growth for All in the Region.** It aims to create a platform for high-level interactions **fostering cooperation among IOR nations.**
  - Heads of Navies and Maritime Agencies from **Bangladesh, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania.**
- MAHASAGAR resonates with the Indian Government's SAGAR vision **(Security and Growth for All in the Region).**
  - In 2015, India unveiled its strategic vision for the Indian Ocean i.e. **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** to improve relations with its maritime neighbours on the economic and security fronts.

Read more: A Secure Indian Ocean

NCMC Reviews Cyclone 'Michaung' Preparedness

The **National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)** recently convened to assess the readiness of State governments and Central Ministries for the approaching cyclone **'Michaung' in the Bay of Bengal.**

- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** reported the storm's current location and projected path, indicating potential landfall on coastal Andhra Pradesh.
- The NCMC is a committee set up to coordinate and implement relief measures and operations in the wake of a natural calamity.
  - The NCMC coordinates and oversees the response to major crises, emergencies, and disasters that may affect India.
  - **NCMC is headed by the Cabinet Secretary.**
- Cyclone Michaung is a **tropical cyclone** that is tracking northwest in the western Bay of Bengal.
  - 'Michaung' is named after a suggestion provided by Myanmar. It means strength and resilience.

Read more: Cyclone

New International Air Routes Open for Northeast India

Recently, the **Centre's** Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) initiative has approved **four novel air routes linking northeastern states with international destinations.**

- These routes are set to **connect Assam to Thailand and Bangladesh, Manipur to Myanmar, and Tripura to Bangladesh.**
- Under the UDAN scheme, these routes will offer subsidized airfares, marking a significant step in enhancing regional air connectivity.
- The UDAN scheme involves **state subsidies for airfares**, with the **Airport Authority of India** managing the bid process, airline selection, and subsequent subsidy allocation, wherein states provide viability gap funding to the lowest bidder.

- The 'International UDAN,' **introduced in 2022**, aims to augment socio-economic progress by augmenting **air connectivity from specific states to international destinations.**

Read more: UDAN initiative

Indian Navy Day 2023

India observes **Navy Day** annually on **4th December, 2023** to honor **Operation Trident,** a crucial offensive maneuver during the **1971 India-Pakistan War.**

- **Operation Trident**, a defining moment during the 1971 conflict, showcased the Indian Navy's strategic prowess by utilizing **Soviet Osa missile boats armed with 4 SS-N-2 Styx** missiles to neutralize three vessels near the Pakistani port city of Karachi.
- In a recent development, **Commander Prerna Deosthalee** will be the first woman officer of the Indian Navy to command an Indian Navy Warship **(Waterjet FAC INS Trinkat).**

Read more: Indian Navy Day

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