



HIV Drugs Shortage

For Prelims: Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), National AIDS Control Programme.

For Mains: Implications of HIV Drugs Shortage, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and its prevalence.

Why in News?

Recently, India is witnessing the shortage of [HIV \(Human Immunodeficiency Virus\)](#) Drugs, certain **Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs in Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART)** centres.

- The **National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO)** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the **nodal agency responsible for overlooking and coordinating activities of the [National AIDS Control Programme \(NACP\)](#)** along with the Central Medical Services Society, which is responsible for centralised tendering and pooled procurement of different HIV products.

What is Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)?

- 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**.
- If HIV is not treated, it can lead to **AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome)**.

Why is the shortage Concerned?

- People living with HIV need access to treatment with a **combination of drugs known as antiretroviral therapy to suppress the virus**, preserve their health, and prevent transmission of the virus to an HIV-negative partner.
- Staying on antiretroviral therapy continuously is **crucial to keep the virus suppressed**.

What has Driven the Shortages of These drugs?

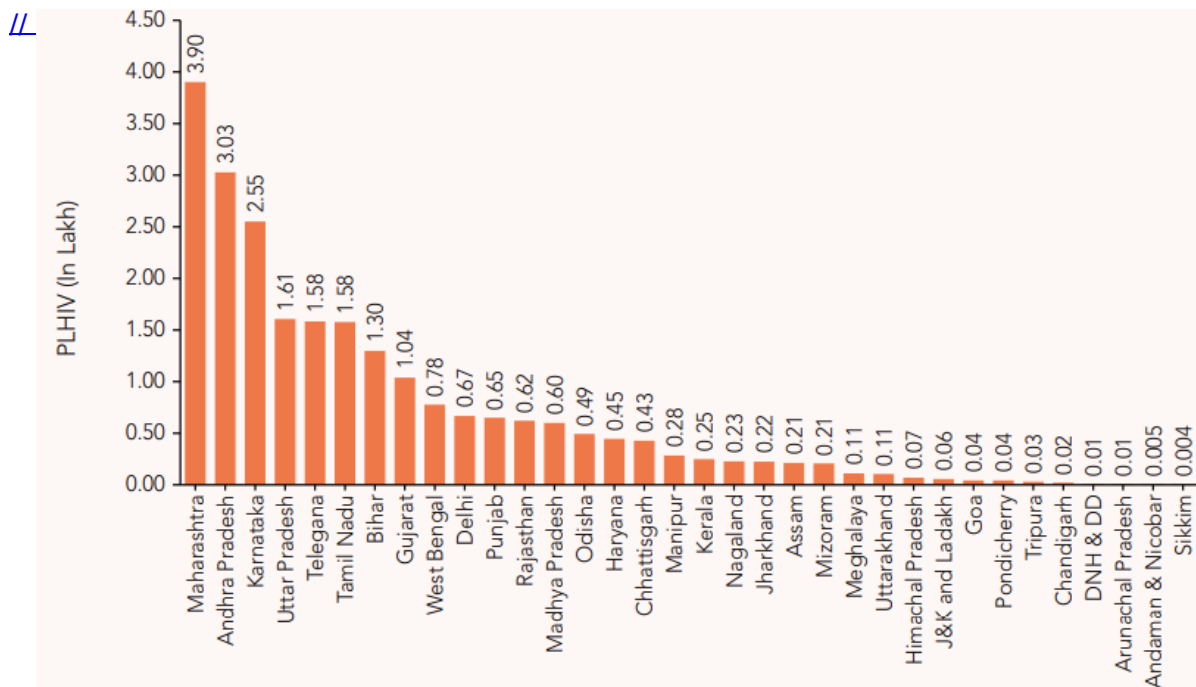
- The failure of the pooled procurement mechanism. The tender for pooled procurement of life-saving antiretroviral medicines **has faced bureaucratic delays in 2014, 2017, and now again in 2022**.
- Although the state is not facing an acute shortage, **medicines are running low, with some stocks set to expire**.
- Officials are forced to compromise, for example, by portioning drugs meant for adults and giving

them to children.

What are the Implications?

- If not addressed in time, the drug shortage could result in a full-blown public health concern.
- According to NACO, any irregularity in following the prescribed regimen can lead to **resistance to HIV drugs**, and therefore can weaken or negate its effect.
- If ART is not taken daily the probability of infection building up in the body increases, making the person unwell and infectious.
- These risks undoing India's hard-won gains against HIV/AIDS and further derails global progress, which is not on track to meet the goal of ending AIDS by 2030.

What is the Prevalence of HIV/AIDS in India?



- As per the government's HIV Estimation 2021 report, the number of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in India is 24.01 lakh.
 - Annual new HIV infections have declined by 46% in India since 2010
 - **Maharashtra** had the **maximum numbers** followed by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

- The Adult Prevalence (15-49 Yrs.) rate of HIV is **highest in Mizoram (2.37%)** followed by Nagaland and Manipur.
 - HIV/AIDS in Mizoram is **10 times higher** than the national average (0.22%).

Way Forward

- What is urgently needed is the political will from the Ministry of Health to take necessary measures to ensure that drug shortages, as happened over the last decade, are not experienced by its programmes, such as HIV and TB, in the future.
- If ignored, the consequences impact the right to health and drive drug resistance, a significant public health challenge for the country.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Which one of the following statements is not correct? (2019)

- (a) Hepatitis B virus is transmitted much like HIV.
- (b) Hepatitis B unlike Hepatitis C, does not have a vaccine.
- (c) Globally, the number of people infected with Hepatitis B and C viruses are several times more than those infected with HIV.
- (d) Some of those infected with Hepatitis B and C viruses do not show the symptoms for many years.

Ans: (b)

- **Hepatitis B is a viral infection** that attacks the liver and can cause both acute and chronic disease. The virus is transmitted through contact with the blood or other body fluids of an infected person, **much like HIV transmission.**
- A vaccine against Hepatitis B has been available since 1982. The vaccine is 95% effective in preventing infection and the development of chronic disease and liver cancer, due to which it came to be known as first 'anti-cancer' vaccine.
- According to the WHO data, an estimated 296 million people are living with Hepatitis B, whereas an estimated 58 million people have chronic Hepatitis C infection. There were approximately 37.7 million people living with HIV at the end of 2020 with 1.5 million people becoming newly infected in 2020 globally.
- Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus, ranging in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness. The Hepatitis C virus is a blood borne virus and the most common modes of infection are through exposure to small quantities of blood. This may happen through drug use, unsafe injection practices, unsafe health care, and the transfusion of unscreened blood and blood products.
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q2. 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)

- The problem of transfusion-transmitted diseases (TTD) is directly proportionate to the prevalence of infection in the blood donor community.
- Several infectious diseases have been found to be associated with tattooing, including some TTDs.
- Hepatitis B virus spreads when blood, semen, or other body fluid infected with the hepatitis B virus enters the body of a person who is not infected. Hence, 2 is correct.
- HIV-AIDS spreads only through certain body fluids from a person who has HIV. These fluids are blood, semen, pre-seminal fluids, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. It is transmitted by sexual intercourse or sharing injection, drug equipment, such as needles, etc. **Hence, 3 is correct.**
- Chikungunya virus is transmitted from people to people through mosquito bites, most often by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes. These are the same mosquitoes that transmit dengue virus. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. It is not a TTD. **Hence, 1 is not correct.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same. **(2013)**

Source: DTE

Mikhail Gorbachev and Cold War

For Prelims: Mikhail Gorbachev, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Glasnost and Perestroika, World War, Cold War, Warsaw Pact, Soviet Union, Non-Alignment Movement.

For Mains: Cold War and Non alignment Movement.

Why in News?

Recently, the last leader of the Soviet Union, **Mikhail Gorbachev** died at the age of 91.

What was the contribution of Mikhail Gorbachev?

- **About:**
 - He joined **Communist Party of the Soviet Union** as a youth, and after Stalin's death, he became **a keen proponent of De-Stalinisation reforms started by Nikita Khrushchev.**
 - He was selected as the First Party Secretary of the Stavropol Regional Committee in 1970.
 - In 1985 when he was elected as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in other words, **the de facto ruler of the government.**
- **Achievements:**
 - **Major Reforms:**
 - He introduced the policies of **"glasnost" and "perestroika"** which helped in

freedom of speech and press and **the economic expansion** of the economy.

- **Perestroika** means “**restructuring**,” specifically of the **Communist economy and political** system, by incorporating some features of a market economy into the Soviet economy. It also resulted in the decentralization of financial decision-making.
- **Glasnost** means “**openness**,” particularly openness of information and began the democratization of the Soviet Union.
- **Focused on Arms Reduction:**
 - He forged arms reduction deals with the United States and partnerships with Western powers to **remove the Iron Curtain** that had divided Europe since World War Two and reunify Germany.
 - **Iron curtain is** the political, military, and **ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union after World War II** to seal off itself and its dependent eastern and central European allies from open contact with the West and other noncommunist areas.
- **Ended the Cold War:**
 - Gorbachev is credited with bringing the [Cold War](#) to an end, **which resulted in the dissolution of the USSR into separate countries.**
- **Nobel Peace Prize:**
 - He was awarded the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) in 1990 for his efforts to end the **Cold War between the US and USSR.**
- **Indian Connection:**
 - Gorbachev **visited India twice, in 1986 and 1988.**
 - His objective was **to extend his disarmament initiatives in Europe to Asia and to secure Indian cooperation.**
 - It was Gorbachev’s **first visit to a non-Warsaw Pact country** after taking over as leader of the Soviet Union.
 - The then Prime Minister Rajiv hailed Gorbachev as a “**crusader for peace**”.
 - His address to **India’s Parliament** during the visit received hyperbolic coverage in the Indian and Soviet press and was seen as a high point of Indian diplomacy.

What was the Cold War?



- **About:**
 - The Cold War was a **division between Russia and western countries (the US and its allies, like Britain)**, which started in the 1940s and lasted until 1991.
 - It was a war between **two ideas and ways of ruling - communism** (the east) and **capitalism** (the west).

- The Russians operated a communist state (from 1922 to 1991), while western countries like the US were capitalist countries.
- Throughout the Cold War, **communist and capitalist nations tried to outdo each other**, competing to develop the best technologies and weapons.
- **India's Role:**
 - **Non-Alignment Movement:**
 - The policy of **Non Alignment Movement (NAM)** did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought to remain independent or neutral.
 - The basic concept for the group originated in 1955 during discussions that took place at the **Asia-Africa Bandung Conference** held in Indonesia.
 - The **first NAM Summit Conference** took place in Belgrade, **Yugoslavia, in September 1961.**
 - **Purpose:**
 - The purpose of the organization was enumerated in **Havana Declaration of 1979** to ensure "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries" in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign subjugation.
 - During the cold war era the NAM played a vital role in stabilizing the world order and preserving peace and security.
 - **Neutral Stand:**
 - India was able to take **decisions and stances at the international level serving its own interest** rather than serving the interest of the superpowers.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Among the following Presidents of India, who was also the Secretary General of Non-Aligned Movement for some period? (2009)

- (a) Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan
- (b) Varahagiri Venkatagiri
- (c) Giani Zail Singh
- (d) Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was created and founded by the developing countries during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the people of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world and at the height of the Cold War.
- Some of the decolonized countries decided to stay away from joining any of the two major power poles that developed post-Second World War during the Cold War era.
- The final resolution of Bandung Conference of 1955 laid the foundation for the Non Aligned Movement (NAM).
- **Giani Zail Singh served as the Chairperson of NAM from 1983-86. He was the second Indian to chair the NAM after Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, who chaired the NAM during 1983. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. What problems were germane to the decolonization process in the Malay Peninsula? (2017)

Civil Servants and Freedom of Speech

For Mains: Right of Civil Servants to Express their Views on Government Policy and Action

Why in News?

A senior IAS officer from Telangana, tweeted from her personal account in support of Ms. Bano and questioned the Gujarat government's decision of releasing **11 men convicted on charges of gang-raping Bilkis Bano** during the 2002 Gujarat riots.

- It prompted a debate about whether the officer **breached the Civil Service (Conduct) Rules of 1964** and revived the debate about **civil servants' right to express their personal views on matters of law and governance.**

What is Bilkis Bano Case?

- **About:**
 - On 15th August 2022, 11 convicts who were serving life sentences for rape and murder in the case, walked out of prison to a heroes' welcome.
 - Many also **pointed out that the release is in contravention of guidelines issued by both the federal government** and the Gujarat state government - both say that rape and murder convicts cannot be granted remission.
 - Life terms in these crimes are usually served until death in India.
 - The Supreme Court has asked the Gujarat government for its response after taking up petitions filed by opposition politicians and activists.
- **Role of Civil Servant:**
 - Adding the word "civil servant" by the officer in the tweet on Bilkis Bano Case is aligned with the sense that the **dharma of the civil servant is to uphold constitutional principles in letter and in spirit, and the rule of law.**
 - In this case, **both the spirit of the Constitution and the rule of law were being subverted.**
 - This **could be a very dangerous precedent**, as recently when the Andhra Pradesh government released eight murder convicts (on remission, despite them not completing the mandatory 14 years in jail).
 - For some actions if civil servants, whether retired or in service, speak up, that would have some kind of a deterrent [effect] on the arbitrary abuse of bureaucratic power.

Can a Civil Servant Express their Views on Government Policy and Action?

- A civil servant has the right to tweet because the citizens of this country have the **fundamental right of free speech (Article 19)** guaranteed to them under the Constitution, which is subject to reasonable restrictions in the interest of securing the state's sovereignty, international relations, health, morality, etc.
- But when a **civil servant undertakes government service**, he/she subject themselves to certain disciplinary rules.
 - That prevents a **government servant from becoming a member of a political**

organisation, or any organisation of such a nature, or expressing herself freely with regard to anything that has to do with the governance of the country.

- This rule is from the British era and **there is no doubt that the British were very, very strict** and didn't want their officers to be talking about how bad the governance was.
- But in a democracy, the **right to criticise the government is a fundamental right**.

What are the Related Judgements?

▪ **Lipika Paul v. the State of Tripura:**

- In a landmark judgment, in January of 2020, the **High Court of Tripura ruled that** 'a government servant is not devoid of her right of free speech, a fundamental right.'
- The Court did **acknowledge that the expression of the right to speech is subject to curtailment in certain circumstances**; nevertheless, the judgment has significant implications concerning the right to freedom of expression for government employees.
 - In the Bilkis Bano case, the officer was entitled to hold her own beliefs and express them in the manner she desired, subject to not crossing the borders laid down in the Conduct Rules which were applicable in Tripura.
 - A fundamental right cannot be curtailed except by a valid law made by a legislature.
 - **Rule 9 of the Rules of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules states**, "No Government servant shall... make any statement of fact or opinion... which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the Central Government or a State Government."

▪ **Kerala High Court Judgement:**

- In 2018, the Kerala High Court had said "One cannot be prevented from expressing his views merely because he is an employee".
- In a democratic society, **every institution is governed by democratic norms**.

Way Forward

▪ **Uphold Democratic Values:**

- Nowadays, many government officers and ministers are encouraged to communicate government policies to the general public through social media.
 - Unfortunately, **government officers are given only one way of encouragement** i.e., to say good things in the media.
 - The problem with this is that if any policy is being implemented **everybody has a right to express his or her opinion, a right to object, a right to dissent in a democracy**.

▪ **Upholding Rights of the Officer:**

- **Government officers have a duty to increase transparency about policies through social media**. A case-by-case approach must be followed.

▪ **Need is to make Differentiation:**

- The need of the hour is to **make a differentiation between what is something that's going to hurt society, hurt the Constitution, and the rule of law**.
- In the case of Bilkis Bano, the **Supreme Court ordained the release of convicts on remission**, which was executed by the Gujarat government, and the (question is over how it has been done), which was an exception.

[Source: TH](#)

Karnataka Iron Ore Mining

For Prelims: Iron Ore Industry, Iron Ores in Karnataka, E-Auction

Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) raised the “**ceiling limit**” of iron ore mining for Ballari, Chitradurga and Tumakuru districts in **Karnataka**, saying **conservation of the ecology and environment must go hand in hand with the spirit of economic development**.

- Ten years after the Supreme Court clamped down on **production and sale of iron ore in Karnataka**, the Court has relaxed its own orders.

What do we need to know about the Karnataka Iron Ore Mining Ban?

▪ Background:

- In 2010, the Supreme Court shut down the **Obulapuram Mining Company (OMC) in Ballari**, after a [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#) probe was initiated in 2009 for [illegal mining](#).
 - **The illegal mining resulted in** plunder of public wealth, massive loss to exchequer, encroached forest land, ravaged environment and large scale health issue among local population.
- The two [Lokayukta](#) Reports of 2008 and 2011 exposed over 700 government officials, including three chief ministers in the illegal mining scandal.

▪ Supreme Court's Orders:

- After the Supreme Court-appointed **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** report brought attention to rampant violations in mining, the SC passed an order in **2011 to stop mining operations in Ballari**.
- Additionally, SC **banned export of iron ore pellets from Karnataka** with an aim to prevent **environmental degradation** and to preserve **for future generations** as part of the concept of intergenerational equity.
 - SC also fixed the **maximum permissible annual production limit** at 35 MMT for A and B category mines.
- It directed the [Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education \(ICFRE\)](#) to draw up a **reclamation and rehabilitation (R&R)** plan to reverse the **environmental damage caused by illegal mining**.
- In 2012, the SC allowed 18 “**category A**” mines to resume operations.
 - Mines were categorized depending on the extent of illegalities committed by them:
 - **A Category Mines:** These are “leases wherein no illegality/marginal illegality have been found”
 - Mines with more serious infractions fall into **B and C categories**, based on their respective offences.
 - Once the mines were allowed to restart, the ore was sold through e-auctions.

▪ Implication of Order:

- With closure of mines, [steel mills](#) faced **raw material shortages**, forcing them to import from outside India, thereby **opening up the country to business for global iron ore giants**.
- The restrictions on production, e-auction and prices had also affected lakhs of mining dependents in Karnataka making their livelihood uncertain.

What have been the Recent Developments on the Issue?

▪ Mining Firms Appeal:

- In May 2022, **Mining Firms** had asked the **SC to scrap e-auction norms** in the export or sale of iron ore for mining lessees in the districts of Ballari, Tumakuru and Chitradurga.
- They claimed that they were **facing closure due to their stocks not getting sold**

▪ Karnataka Government's Stand:

- The government of Karnataka is in **favour of a complete removal of the ceiling limit**.

▪ **Original Petitioners Stand:**

- The original petitioner opposed any exports on the grounds that **minerals are national assets that need to be preserved and only finished steel should be exported.**

▪ **Supreme Court's Ruling:**

- The Supreme Court has **permitted resumption of exports** of already excavated iron ore from the state through modes **other than e-auction**, and also **increased the ceiling limit on mining for the following mines:**
 - **Ballari:** from 28 MMT to 35 MMT
 - **Chitradurga and Tumakuru districts:** from 7 MMT to 15 MMT
- The court ruled that it was **necessary to create a level playing field** for the mines situated in the three districts with others in the rest of the country.

What is E-Auction in Iron Ore Mining?

▪ **About:**

- An e-auction is a **transaction** between **sellers** (the auctioneers) and **bidders** (suppliers in the business to business scenarios) that takes place on an electronic marketplace.

▪ **Process:**

- After the completion of every bid, **a three-member monitoring committee**, appointed by the **Supreme Court**, publishes a document that **lists the details of the quality of iron ore, the mine that it belongs to, number of bidders for it and the final takers.**
- Once registered, the buyer can **see forthcoming auctions** on which they can bid.
- Each seller **specifies the quality of ore** that will go under the hammer, its **type** and the **floor price** from which the bidding should start.
- The **sellers** are those who have legal iron ore mines and **buyers** are typically steel manufacturers.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. In India, State Governments do not have the power to auction non-coal mines.
2. Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand do not have gold mines.
3. Rajasthan has iron ore mines.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (d)

Explanation:

- Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 2015 relates to the regulation of the mining sector in India and specifies the requirement for obtaining and granting leases for mining operations. It amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. Through this amendment, the Central Government has replaced the first-come-firstserved/ discretionary mechanism for grant of mineral resources by a transparent and competitive auction process.
- As per the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015, the auction of

mining licences of non-coal minerals is to be conducted by the respective State governments.

Hence, statement 1 is not correct.

- India has three working gold mines (Hutti and Uti in Karnataka and Hirabuddini in Jharkand). While mining from Kolar gold fields has been abandoned in 2001, the Ramagiri gold mines, Ramagiri district (Andhra Pradesh) were locked out a few years ago following the poor production of gold and incurring losses to the government. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has now engaged the Australian Indian Resources Ltd. to commence mining from Ananthpur district. There are known deposits of gold bearing quartz rocks in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Iron ore in Rajasthan is found in Jaipur, Udaipur, Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Bhilwara, Alwar, Bharatpur, Dausa and Banswara. This includes resources of Iron-Ore both Hematite and Magnetite. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. Account for the present location of iron and steel industries away from the source of raw material, by giving examples. (2020)

[Source: TH](#)

Crime Multi Agency Centre

Why in News?

A few states and one Union Territory have not uploaded a single alert on [Cri-MAC \(Crime Multi Agency Centre\)](#) platform.

- West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim and Union Territory of Dadra, Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu have not uploaded a single alert.
- Delhi, Assam and Haryana uploaded the maximum number of alerts on the portal.

What is Cri-MAC?

- The Cri-MAC was launched in 2020 by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which is run by [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\)](#).**
- It was launched to share **information on crime and criminals** with various law enforcement agencies and ensure a seamless flow of information among them.
- It aims to help in early detection and prevention of crime incidents across the country.
- Cri-MAC facilitates **dissemination of information about significant crimes**, including human trafficking across the country on real-time basis and enables inter-State coordination.
- It can help in locating and identifying the **trafficked victims** as also in prevention, detection and investigation of crime.

What is Human Trafficking?

- **About:**
 - Human trafficking involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.

- Exploitation include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.
- **Relevant Laws in India:**
 - **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956** is the premier legislation to deal with this issue.
 - [Article 23 and 24 \(Right Against Exploitation\)](#) of the Constitution of India.
 - 25 sections in IPC such as 366A, 366B, 370 and 374.
 - [The Juvenile Justice Act](#) and the [Information Technology \(IT\) Act](#) and also the [Prevention of Child Labour Act](#), the [Bonded Labour \(Abolition\) Act](#), among others.
- **India's Efforts in Combating Human Trafficking:**
 - **In July 2021**, the Ministry of Women and Child Development released [Draft anti-trafficking Bill](#), the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021.
 - India has ratified the [United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime \(the Palermo Convention\)](#) which has a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.
 - India has ratified the [SAARC Convention](#) on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.
 - **Anti-Trafficking Nodal Cell** was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in 2006 to act as a focal point for communicating various decisions and follow up on action taken by the State Governments to combat the crime of Human Trafficking.
 - **Judicial Colloquium:** In order to train and sensitize the trial court judicial officers, Judicial Colloquium on human trafficking are held at the High court level.
 - Various initiatives such as ["SwadharGreh Scheme"](#), "Sakhi", "Universalization of Women Helpline", provide for a supportive institutional framework and mechanism for addressing concerns of women affected by violence.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. India's proximity to the two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same? **(2018)**

[Source: TH](#)

Vostok Exercise 2022

Why in News?

Recently, India joined a multilateral strategic and command **Exercise Vostok - 2022** in Russia along with China among other countries.



What is Exercise Vostok?

- It will involve troops from several [ex-Soviet](#) nations, **China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua and Syria**.
 - The [Indian Army](#) was represented by the contingent of troops from **7/8 Gorkha Rifles**.
- It is aimed at **interaction and coordination amongst other participating military contingents** and observers.
- The Vostok 2022 exercise will be held at seven firing ranges in **Russia's Far East and the Sea of Japan** and involve more than 50,000 troops and over 5,000 weapons units, including 140 aircraft and 60 warships.
- The Indian Army contingent will look forward to **sharing practical aspects** and putting into practice the validated drills, procedures and practice amalgamation of new technology through discussions and tactical exercises.

What are India's Exercises with China & Russia?

- **China:**
 - [Exercise Hand-in-Hand:](#)
 - The aim of the exercise is to practice joint planning and conduct of **counter terrorist operations in semi urban terrain**.
- **Russia:**
 - [Exercise Indra:](#)
 - The exercise will entail the conduct of counter terror operations under the [United Nations](#) mandate by a joint force against international terror groups.
 - The INDRA series of exercises began in 2003 and was conducted as a bilateral naval exercise alternately between the two countries.
 - However, the first joint Tri-Services Exercise was conducted in 2017.
 - [Exercise TSENTR:](#)
 - Exercise TSENTR 2019 is part of the annual series of large-scale exercises that form part of the Russian Armed Forces' annual training cycle.
 - [Exercise ZAPAD 2021:](#)
 - It is a multinational exercise in which 17 countries including India, China, Russia and Pakistan are part of it.
 - It focuses **primarily on operations against terrorists**.

[Source: TH](#)

Stockholm Junior Water Prize

Why in News?

Recently, **Annabelle M. Rayson**, a student from Canada received the **prestigious 2022 Stockholm Junior Water Prize** for her research on **how to treat and prevent [harmful algae blooms](#)**.

- **Harmful Algal Blooms, or HABs**, occur when colonies of algae grow out of control and produce toxic or harmful effects on people, fish, shellfish, marine mammals and birds.

What is Stockholm Junior Water Prize?

- **About:**
 - Stockholm Junior Water is an **international competition** where students aged **15 to 20 years present solutions to major water challenges**.
 - It has been organized every year **since 1997 by the Stockholm International Water Institute, with Xylem**, an American water technology provider.
 - This prize is a popular part of the **[World Water Week](#)**.
- **Other Prizes:**
 - **Diploma of Excellence:**
 - It was awarded to **Laura Nedel Drebes and Camily Pereira dos Santos from Brazil** for their development of addressing the issue of **period poverty** — the inaccessibility to sanitary pads.
 - **People's Choice Award:**
 - The People's Choice Award went to **Mishal Faraz from the United Arab Emirates** for Water Bottle Project to **discourage the use of single-use** plastic water bottles and strengthen water security.

[Source: DTE](#)

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