



## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### Global Impact of Lead Exposure on Cardiovascular Health

- A recent study published in *The Lancet Planetary Health journal* reveals that **lead** exposure had a significant role in causing **cardiovascular deaths** worldwide.
  - In 2019, approximately **5.5 million people succumbed to cardiovascular diseases** linked to lead exposure, comprising 30% of all global cardiovascular deaths.
- **Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)** bore the brunt of lead exposure-related health impacts, with about **95% of the affected population residing in these regions.**
  - Despite the elimination of leaded petrol, **LMICs witnessed six times more deaths from cardiovascular diseases** than high-income countries.
  - **Nations with the highest lead exposure burdens include** Iran, Afghanistan, Yemen, Peru, Vietnam, the Philippines, and parts of Central Africa.
- Apart from cardiovascular disease, lead exposure is associated with **chronic kidney disease and developmental intellectual disabilities.**
  - Lead exposure resulted in the loss of **765 million Intelligence quotient (IQ) points** among children under five, with an **80% higher loss in LMICs compared to previous estimates.**
- The economic costs of lead exposure, including IQ loss in children and cardiovascular disease deaths, **amounted to USD 6 trillion globally in 2019, or 7% of the global GDP.**

Read more: [Lead Poisoning](#)

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### Operation Sajag

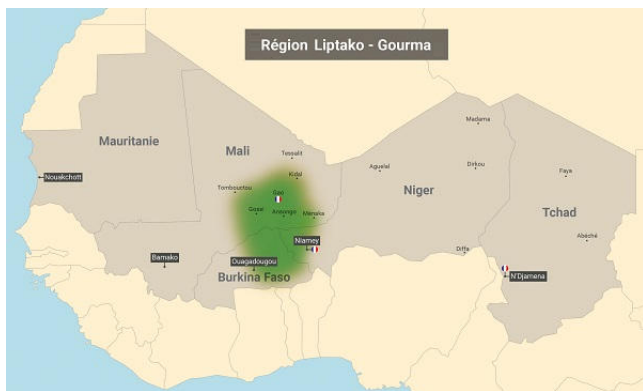
- **'Operation Sajag'** was conducted on September 18, 2023, by the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** along the west coast.
  - 'Operation Sajag' is a monthly, day-long drill that serves as a continuous feedback loop. The drill's primary goals are to revalidate coastal security mechanisms and raise awareness among sea-going fishermen.
  - The drill involved extensive document verification and crew pass checks for all fishing boats, barges, and crafts at sea.
- ICG was established in **August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978** as an **independent Armed force of India.**
  - ICG is the **fourth largest Coast Guard in the world**, it has played a significant role in securing the Indian coasts and enforcing regulations in the **maritime zones of India.**
- To fortify coastal security, the ICG has introduced various measures, including the issuance of **biometric cards for fishermen, implementation of colour coding for fishing boats based on state, coastal mapping,** and training of marine police personnel.

Read more: [Indian Coast Guard](#)

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### Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso Signed a Mutual Defence Pact

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Recently, ministerial delegations from three **Sahel Countries**, i.e., **Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso** announced a mutual defense pact at Mali's Capital Bamako.

- It aims at establishing an architecture of Collective Defence and Mutual Assistance among the three countries.
- The Pact has been signed **under the provisions of Liptako-Gourma Charter**, which established the alliance of Sahel states.
- The region of **Liptako-Gourma includes the border areas of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger**, where these countries meet.
- The Alliance will be a combination of Military and Economic efforts of the three countries, which is largely targeted towards fighting terrorism and Jihadism.
- The pact also assumes significance in the wake of West African Regional Grouping **ECOWAS** threatening to attack Niger over the **coup** that happened in the country.

**Read More :-** [ECOWAS](#)

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## **Funding Challenges for Indian Space Start-Ups**

There have been rising concerns and issues with respect to funding mechanisms of space start-ups, marring the growth of a prospective sector.

- **The Space sector** can grow up to 44 Billion dollars over the next 10 years from the current value of 8 billion dollars, as per the Director of **INSPACE**.
- Government **should consider setting up soft funds and additional incentives** to propel the growth of the space sector, along the lines of **Start Up India Scheme** etc.
- Another concern that arises is that **95% of the equipment required for space sector manufacturing needs to be imported** and it may take India another 10 years to attain self-sufficiency.
- India's Space Sector has already been witnessing **rapid growth as the IN-SPACE portal has registered around 420 start-ups until now.**
- **India's Draft Space Activities Bill, 2017 and Indian Space Policy, 2023** is slated to provide much needed push and vigour to the burgeoning sector in the near time, if implemented effectively.

**Read More:-** [Draft Space Activities Bill,2017](#) and [Indian Space Policy,2023](#)