Prelim Bits 06-03-2019

Rare Diseases and Orphan Drugs

- India accounts for about $1/4^{th}$ of all patients suffering rare diseases worldwide.
- A rare disease occurs infrequently in a population, but there is no universal definition.
- There are 3 parameters based on which a disease is said to be rare disease
    1. The total number of people having the disease
    2. Its prevalence
    3. Non-availability of treatment for the disorder
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has suggested that a rare disease should be defined as one with frequency less than 6.5 – 10 per 10,000 people.
- Hereditary sensory and autonomic neuropathy type II (HSAN2) and thalassemia are two such diseases.
- Orphan drugs are those that are used to treat rare diseases.
- These are the drugs that are underdeveloped, since they are required by fewer people.
- USA became the first country to enact Orphan Drug Act in 1983.

Exercise Al Nagah III

- It is the bilateral joint exercise between India and Oman.
- It is scheduled at Jabel Al Akhdar Mountains in Oman
- It aims to enhance interoperability in counterterrorist operations in semi urban mountainous terrain.
- It is the third in the series, while the first 2 joint exercises were held in Oman in January 2015 and India in March 2017 respectively.

National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP)

- An agreement was signed between World Bank and Government of India to provide a $250-million loan for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP).
- The key focus of the project is to promote women-owned and women-led farm and non-farm enterprises across value chains.

- It will also enable them to build businesses, access finance, markets and networks and generate employment.
- It would support enterprise development programs for rural poor women and youth.
- It creates a platform to access finance including start-up financing options to build their individual and/or collectively owned and managed enterprises.
- It is an additional financing to the $500-million National Rural Livelihoods Project (NRLP) approved by the World Bank.

HL-2M Tokamak

- China plans to complete the construction of the artificial sun device (HL-2M Tokamak).
- It is designed to replicate the nuclear fusion process that occurs naturally in the sun and stars.
- The device provides almost infinite clean energy through controlled nuclear fusion.
- Its plasma is mainly composed of electrons and ions.
- The country's existing Tokamak devices have achieved an electron temperature of over 100 million degrees Celsius in its core plasma, and an ion temperature of 50 million degrees Celsius.
- The new HL-2M device shall provide main technical support for China's participation in the experiment and operation of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER).
- The ITER is a large international scientific project that is a global collaboration of 35 countries, including China, Russia and the US.

International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

- It is an informal partnership between Nations and organizations which strives to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems around the world.
- It’s actions highlight globally the importance of coral reefs and related ecosystems to environmental sustainability, food security and social and cultural wellbeing
- It was founded in 1994 by eight governments: Australia, France, Japan, Jamaica, the Philippines, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.
- It was announced

    1. at the First Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 1994
    2. at the high level segment of the Inter-sessional Meeting of the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development in April 1995.

- India is a member of ICRI.

Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) Scheme

- It was notified by Department of Commerce of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- The scheme is for Specified Agriculture Products.
- It aims to provide assistance for the international component of freight and marketing of agricultural produce.
- It is likely to mitigate disadvantage of higher cost of transportation of export of specified agriculture products due to trans-shipment.
- It would be suitably included in the Foreign Trade Policy (2015-20).

Source: PIB,The Hindu, Indian Express

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