Prelim Bits 18-02-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Leprosy Disease

India accounts for 52% of world's new leprosy patients after COVID pandemic.

Hansen's disease

- Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae.
- The disease affects the skin, peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes.
- Leprosy is known to occur at all ages and it is curable.
- Treatment during early stages can prevent disability.
- Leprosy is transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contact with untreated cases.

Leprosy in India

- India was declared as "Leprosy Eliminated" in 2005.
- But it still accounts for over half (52%) of world's new leprosy patients.
- This increase in numbers was mainly attributed towards COVID-19.
- After COVID pandemic the case detections are dropped by 43% in 2020-22 and by 34% in 2021-22.
- A decline in detection has led to increase in patients with grade 2 disabilities.

Steps Taken to eliminate leprosy

> *India has achieved the prevalence rate of 1 case per 10,000 population at national level in 2005.*

- **National Leprosy Eradication Programme (1954-55)** - Leprosy-free India is the vision of the NLEP.
- **ABSULS (ASHA-based Surveillance for Leprosy Suspects)** - where grassroot level workers constantly engaged in examining and reporting suspects.
- **Focused Leprosy Campaign (FLC)** - Special emphasis under the FLC was given to areas that were difficult to access or had child cases and cases with disabilities.
- *India has set the target of Leprosy Mukt Bharat by 2027, 3 years ahead of the SDG.*
- **National Strategic Plan & Roadmap for Leprosy (2023-27)** - It will aid in advancing the campaign against leprosy, to stop transmission, by speeding case detection efforts and maintaining a robust surveillance infrastructure.
- **Nikusth 2.0** - It is an integrated portal for leprosy case management under National

Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP).

References

1. The Hindu|India accounts for 52% of world's new leprosy
2. PIB | Leprosy Mukt Bharat by 2027

Ohio Chemical Spill

A freight train carrying hazardous substances derailed near the village of East Palestine in Ohio, U.S recently.

- The toxic chemicals carried in the train involves vinyl chloride, butyl acrylate, ethylhexyl acrylate, and ethylene glycol monobutyl ether.
- Officials was reported to be burned the toxic vinyl chloride by releasing it into a trench, sending black smoke high in the air.

Vinyl chloride (VC)

- It is a colourless industrial gas that burns easily.
- **Uses** - It is used in the manufacturing of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), a form used to make variety of plastic products.
- It is also produced as a combustion product in tobacco smoke.
- **Effects** - Exposure to VC may leads to a rare form of liver cancer, brain and lung cancers, lymphoma, and leukemia.
- VC in the air breaks down and forms other harmful compounds, including hydrochloric acid, formaldehyde, and carbon dioxide.
- Burning vinyl chloride, releases phosgene and hydrogen chloride into the air.
- Phosgene is extremely toxic and it was used as a chemical weapon by the Germany army during World War I.
- Hydrogen chloride is an irritant that affects the skin, the nose, the mouth, and the eyes.

References

1. The Hindu|Toxic chemical spill in Ohio
2. The NewYork Times | Health Fears Remain After Ohio Derailment

REAIM 2023

The world's first international summit on the responsible use of artificial intelligence in the military was recently held in Netherlands.

Responsible AI in Military Domain Summit (REAIM) 2023

- **Host** - The World Forum, Hague, Netherlands

- **Co-host** - Republics of Korea
- **Objective** - It acts as a platform for all stakeholders to forge a common understanding of the opportunities, dilemmas and vulnerabilities associated with military AI.
- It brings together governments, corporations, academia, startups, and civil societies.
- Themes of REAIM 2023:
    - Mythbusting the characteristics of AI
    - Responsible deployment and use of AI
    - Governance frameworks for responsible AI

Hague was often referred as the International city of Peace and Justice

References

1. The Hindu | REAIM 2023
2. REAIM 2023 | About REAIM 2023

Mehrauli

Recently, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is undertaking a drive to clear unauthorized encroachments in the Mehrauli Archaeological Park.

Mehrauli is considered to be the oldest 'city' of Delhi and is the oldest area of the metropolis to be continuously inhabited.

Evolution of Mehrauli

- It was founded as Lalkot in the 11th century by Anangpal II, a ruler of the Rajput Tomar dynasty.
- This was later christened *Quila Rai Pithora* by Mughal court historian Abu'l Fazl in his epic hagiography, 'Ain-i-Akbari'.
- This city then passed hands from the Tomars to the Chauhans, who are credited to have further fortified the complex.
- The city then fell into the hands of the Mamluk dynasty (Slave dynasty) in 1192.
- Later, Qutubudin Aibak, the first ruler of the Slave dynasty, began construction of Qutub Minar as well as the Quwwat-al-Islam Mosque, the oldest known mosque in north India.

India's oldest mosque, Cheraman Juma, was built by Arab merchants in Kerala

- Mehrauli is also a spiritual centre, home to both Hindu and Muslim shrines.
- The annual community celebration of 'Phool Walon ki Sair' or Sair-e-Gulfaroshan (walk of the flowers) is a witness to Mehrauli's cosmopolitanism.
- This 19th-century Mughal-era festival has become the symbol of the city's communal

harmony since 1962.

References

1. The Indian Express | Mehrauli-The oldest ‘city’ of Delhi
2. The Indian Express | Anti-encroachment drive

Lavani Dance

Recently a noted Lavani dancer Megha Ghadge raised the issue of obscenity and vulgarity in dance performances under the name of Lavani programmes.

Lavani Dance

- It is traditional folk-art form of Maharastra with an aesthetical combination of singing, enactment and dance.
- The word Lavani comes from 'lavanya' or beauty.
- Lavani has attained particular popularity in the Peshwa era in the 18th century.
- Traditionally, performances were held in front of kings, and for the entertainment of tired soldiers resting during breaks in fighting.
- There are several sub-genres of Lavani, of which the most popular is the Shringarik (erotic) kind.

References

1. The Indian Express | What is Lavani
2. The Indian Express | When Lavani hit the wrong note

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