Sign Language Day

Why in News?

International Day of Sign Languages was celebrated on September 23.

What is International Day of Sign Languages?

- **Sign Language –** It is a natural visual-manual language that fosters communication within both the Deaf and hearing communities.
- **International Day of Sign Languages –** It was established through the 2017 UN General Assembly Resolution.
- **2024 Theme -** "Sign up for Sign Language Rights."
- **Indian Sign Language** – It is fundamentally different from Hindi, English, and other spoken languages in India.
- It possesses its own unique structure and is not merely a hand representation of any spoken language.
- **Significance of the day -** It underscores the vital role of sign languages in promoting the rights and recognition of deaf individuals worldwide.

There are 70 million deaf people globally, with over 80% residing in developing countries and using over 300 different sign languages.

- **Strengthen Development** - Highlights the importance of early access to sign language and quality education, growth and development of deaf individuals.
- **Preserve Diversity** - Serves as a reminder of the need to preserve sign languages as vital components of cultural and linguistic diversity.
- **Create Awareness** - Highlights the importance of creating positive awareness about Indian Sign Language (ISL) across all sections of society.
- **Fulfil Rights** - Ensures the full realization of human rights for deaf individuals.
- World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) was established on this day in 1951, further reinforcing the global commitment to recognizing and preserving the rich tapestry of sign languages.

What are the initiatives launched?

- **New ISL Terms** - Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) has introduced 2500 new ISL terms covering subjects like mathematics, science, and various academic fields.
- **New Concept Videos** - 100 Concept Videos were released for hearing-impaired children in the 6th grade explaining subjects like math and science.
- **ISL Dictionary Regional Languages**- ISL dictionary is now available in 10 regional

languages, making it easier for diverse communities to engage with ISL.

- **Educational Animated Videos in ISL** - These videos focused on moral values and provide a new learning experience for hearing-impaired children.
- **Deaf Role Model Videos in ISL** – It aims to inspire and motivate hearing-impaired children by showcasing successful deaf individuals who serve as role models.
- **7th Indian Sign Language Competition** - The event featured the winners of the 7th Indian Sign Language Competition.

> *ISL Competition is a national-level contest showcasing the creativity and skills of students with hearing disabilities.*

What are the schemes available for helping persons with disabilities?

- **Nodal Department** - Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)
- **Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP)** - It provides funds to various Implementing Agencies for distributing aids and assistive devices to eligible individuals with disabilities across the country like Cochlear Implant Surgery for children with hearing impairments.
- **Financial Assistance for Deaf Colleges** - DEPwD offers financial support to colleges specifically for deaf students.
- **Scholarships for Students with Disabilities (Divyangjan)** – It provides scholarships for students with disabilities including for deaf and dumb boys and girls.
- **National Institutes and Regional Centers**
  - Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for Speech & Hearing Disabilities in Mumbai.
  - Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLRTC) in New Delhi.
  - 25 Composite Regional Centres (CRCs).
- **Diploma in Teaching Indian Sign Language** - ISLRTC offers a diploma course in teaching Indian Sign Language, with tuition fees waived for students registered with the Unique Disability ID (UDID).
- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act of 2016** – It emphasizes inclusive education as a fundamental right.
  - Educational institutions to ensure that children with benchmark disabilities including Deaf and Dumb children—those with a disability of 40% or more—have access to free, quality education in an inclusive environment until the ***age of 18.***
  - 5% reservation for persons with disabilities in government and aided higher educational institutions.
- **Samagra Shiksha Scheme** – It provides dedicated support for Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs (CwSN).
  - Financial support for aids and educational materials, alongside tailored interventions that foster their participation in schools from pre-school through class XII.
  - Stipend of ***Rs. 200 per month*** is provided to support girl children with disabilities.
  - Implemented by Department of School Education & Literacy.

Reference

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