UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 12-05-2025

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History, Art and Culture

Revival of Ancient Ayurvedic Texts

Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has recently successfully revived two significant Ayurvedic manuscripts: Dravyaratnākara Nighaṇṭu and Dravyanamākara Nighaṇṭu.

• **Ayurvedic Manuscripts -** Are ancient texts preserving medicinal knowledge, including plant names, therapeutic uses, and formulations. Nighaṇṭus are traditional lexicons detailing the properties of medicinal substances.

• **Dravyaratnākara Nighaṇṭu -** Authored by Mudgala Paṇḍita in 1480 AD, this 18-chapter text provides in-depth information on drug synonyms, actions, and compositions, referencing earlier Nighaṇṭus and introducing new therapeutic substances.

• **Dravyanamākara Nighaṇṭu -** Attributed to Bhisma Vaidya, this post-Dhanvantari text serves as a specialized appendix, comprising 182 verses focused on homonyms in drug names, crucial for Ayurvedic pharmacology.

• **Significance for Ayurvedic Science -** The revival of these texts enriches the understanding of Ayurvedic pharmacology, offering clarity on drug identification and usage, particularly benefiting fields like Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana.

Russia Honours Biju Patnaik

Russia has paid tribute to Biju Patnaik by installing a memorial plaque at its embassy in New Delhi, recognizing his significant role during the Battle of Stalingrad (1942–43).

• **Biju Patnaik** - Born in Cuttack in 1916, Biju Patnaik was a distinguished freedom fighter, skilled aviator, and influential politician. He joined the Royal Indian Air Force in 1936 as a transport and rescue pilot.

• **Aid to Russia in WWII** - During the crucial Battle of Stalingrad, Patnaik flew perilous supply missions, braving German air defenses to deliver essential arms and supplies to the besieged Soviet Red Army.

• **Role in India's Independence -** Patnaik also actively supported India's Quit India Movement by undertaking secret flights for nationalist leaders and played a key role in aiding Indonesia's struggle for independence.

• **The Pivotal Battle of Stalingrad**- The Battle of Stalingrad (July 1942 – February 1943) was a major and bloody WWII confrontation between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union for control of Stalingrad, a strategic city on the Volga.

• **Turning Point of WWII** - The Soviet victory in Stalingrad marked a crucial turning point in World War II, halting the German advance and leading to their eventual retreat from the Eastern Front.

Polity & Governance

CBI Director's Tenure Extended

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has granted a one-year extension to CBI Director Praveen Sood, a Karnataka cadre IPS officer, beyond his scheduled retirement date.

• **About Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** – It is India's top agency for investigating high-profile corruption, economic offenses, and serious crimes. It derives its authority from the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946.

• **Historical Origins and Formation -** Roots trace back to the Special Police Establishment (SPE) formed in 1941.

• **Officially established as** - CBI on April 1, 1963, following recommendations from the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption.

• **Headed by a Director** - An IPS officer of DGP rank.

• **Appointment** – Director is appointed by 3 member selection committee, including the PM, Leader of Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India or their nominee, with a tenure extendable up to five years.

• **Investigative Functions -** Primary functions include investigating anti-corruption cases, economic offenses like fraud and money laundering, and special crimes referred by states or courts. It also serves as India's Interpol nodal agency.

• **Role in Law Enforcement -** Beyond investigations, the CBI maintains criminal records, compiles crime statistics, and facilitates coordination among state police forces, playing a crucial role in India's law enforcement framework.

Kerala's Demand for *Animal Birth Control (*ABC) Rule Changes

Amid rising stray dog attacks and rabies cases, Kerala is advocating for modifications to the existing (ABC) Rules.

• ***Understanding the ABC Rules*** - Enacted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, focus on sterilisation and immunization for stray dog population control, prohibiting culling.

• **Local Bodies' Responsibilities** - The rules mandate local bodies to establish sterilisation centres and ensure humane capture, neutering, vaccination, and release of stray dogs.

• **The ABC Process Explained** - Trained personnel humanely capture stray dogs, which then undergo sterilisation, vaccination against rabies, and are subsequently released back into their original localities following Supreme Court directives.

• **Importance of ABC Measures -** ABC programs are significant for preventing stray dog overpopulation while respecting animal rights and simultaneously protecting public health by reducing rabies occurrences.

• **Promoting Ethical Animal Management** - These rules promote a scientific and ethical approach to managing stray animals, offering an alternative to inhumane culling practices.

Cashless Treatment for Accident Victims

May 5, 2025, India launched a scheme ensuring cashless medical treatment up to ₹1.5 lakh for road accident victims, aiming for timely care.

• **Scheme Applicability and Benefits -** Any person injured in a road accident on Indian roads is eligible for cashless treatment at designated hospitals for up to seven days post-accident.

• **Implementation by National Health Authority (NHA**) - NHA oversees the scheme, collaborating with police, hospitals, and state agencies. Non-designated hospitals offer stabilization before transfer.

• **Monitoring and Government Oversight** - A steering committee led by the Road Secretary monitors the scheme's effectiveness, building on a prior pilot program.

• **Availing Cashless Treatment -** Victims should seek immediate care at designated hospitals (list available via State Road Safety Council or NHA portal) and inform the police.

• **Financial Coverage and Duration** - Treatment up to ₹1.5 lakh is cashless for seven days. Hospitals handle claims with the NHA. Keeping records and the police report is advised.

International Relations and Issues

Balochistan Independence Declaration

On May 9, 2025, Mir Yar Baloch announced Balochistan's independence from Pakistan.

• **International Support -** Baloch urged India to grant recognition and establish an embassy in New Delhi. It also appealed to the UN for peacekeeping forces and demanded the Pakistani Army's withdrawal.

• **Balochistan -** A Southwestern Province of Pakistan. Largest province by area, shares borders with Iran and Afghanistan and has a coastline along the Arabian Sea. Its capital is Quetta.

• **Geography and Demographics -** Characterized by arid, rugged terrain and a desert climate, Balochistan is sparsely populated despite its rich mineral resources.

• **Dominant ethnic group** - Is the Baloch people, with Pashtuns and Brahuis also present.

• **Strategic Significance and Resources -** The region holds substantial reserves of natural gas, coal, copper, and gold. Gwadar port is a crucial component of CPEC, granting China access to the Arabian Sea. India has expressed concerns over human rights in the region.

• **History of Insurgency -** Various Baloch nationalist groups have been engaged in insurgency, seeking greater autonomy or independence, and frequently targeting CPEC infrastructure and Pakistani security forces.

India-Maldives HADR Exercise

INS Sharda's arrival at Maafilaafushi Atoll in the Maldives signifies India's participation in a joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise.

• **Maldivian Archipelago**- Located in the north-central Indian Ocean, the Maldives comprises around 1,200 low-lying coral islands within 26 atolls, with Malé as its capital.

• **Language and Faith** - Dhivehi is the official language, and Islam is the state religion. Arabic, Hindi, and English are also spoken.

• **Diverse Ethnic Roots** - The Maldivian ethnic group has ancestry from Tamils, Sinhalese, Arabs, and traders from Africa and Southeast Asia.

• **Strategic Indian Ocean Location** - Positioned on key global shipping routes, the Maldives holds considerable strategic importance in the Indian Ocean.

• **Importance for India's Maritime Vision -** It is a crucial partner for India's SAGAR and MAHASAGAR doctrines, enhancing India's regional maritime security and outreach.

• **UN Charter's Article 51: Right to Self-Defence**
Article 51 of the UN Charter (1945) enshrines the inherent right of member states to individual or collective self-defence against armed attacks until Security Council intervention.
• **Foundation of International Law** - The UN Charter, signed in 1945 and effective that year, is a legally binding international treaty outlining core principles of international relations, including state sovereignty and the prohibition of force.
• **Context and Purpose of Self-Defence** - Established to provide a legal basis for self-preservation, Article 51 acknowledges states' fundamental right to defend against aggression, crucial for national sovereignty and collective security.
• **Key Elements of Article 51** - The article permits self-defence if an armed attack occurs, mandating immediate reporting of such actions to the Security Council to prevent misuse of this right.
• **Application in Interstate Conflicts** - Primarily invoked in cases of direct state-on-state aggression, responses under Article 51 must be proportional and necessary to the threat.
• **Controversies in Counterterrorism** - The use of Article 51 in counterterrorism against non-state actors is debated, with critics questioning if such actions meet the threshold of an "armed attack."
• **India, Pakistan, and Article 51** - The India-Pakistan conflict, with India's Operation Sindoor and Pakistan's invocation of Article 51, highlights the complex interpretation and application of self-defence in contemporary security challenges.

Security

HAROP Drone in 'Operation Sindoor'

Reports suggest India utilized Israeli HAROP loitering munitions on May 8, 2025, during its retaliatory 'Operation Sindoor'.
• **HAROP: A Loitering Munition -** Developed by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), HAROP is an advanced loitering munition, functioning as both a missile and a UAV. It loiters, selects a target, and self-destructs with an explosive payload.
• **Against High-Value Targets -** Designed to neutralize critical assets like radars, command posts, tanks, and SAMs, HAROP can even engage moving targets.
• **Operational Features -** Unlike conventional missiles, HAROP can search, track, and engage targets dynamically using its electro-optical sensor for real-time visual identification.
• **Key Technical Specifications -** With an endurance of up to 9 hours, it allows for extensive area scanning and deep strikes. It can be launched from various platforms and operate in GPS-denied environments, offering both autonomous and manual attack modes.

Science

Soviet Venus Probe Kosmos 482 Set for Re-entry

over five decades in Earth orbit, the Soviet spacecraft Kosmos 482 is predicted to re-enter the atmosphere around May 10, 2025.

• **Failed Venus Mission -** Launched in March 1972 as part of the Venera program, its intended destination was Venus. However, an upper rocket stage malfunction prevented its escape from Earth's orbit.

• **Stuck in Low Earth Orbit -** Despite the failure, the lander module separated but remained trapped in low Earth orbit instead of proceeding to Venus.

• **Lander Module Details -** The spherical lander module measures about one metre in diameter and weighs roughly 500 kilograms.

• **Durable Construction -** Built with robust materials and a heat shield designed for Venus' harsh environment, some fragments may survive atmospheric re-entry.

• **Uncontrolled Re-entry and Risk Assessment -** The uncontrolled nature of its descent means the landing location is unpredictable, potentially anywhere between 51.7° north and south latitude. Experts, however, consider the risk of harm to be minimal.

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