UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelimbits 12-07-2025

First Malaria Drug for Newborns and Young Infants

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Recently, Novartis has received approval from Swissmedic for Coartem (artemether-lumefantrine) Baby, a first malaria medicine for newborns and young infants.

- **Alternate Name -** The medicine is also known as Reimit Baby in several countries.
- **Joint Development -** Developed in collaboration with Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) to target life-threatening vascular bone disease.
- **African Participation -** Eight African countries took part in the assessment process and are expected to issue fast-track approvals.
- **Birth Risk -** Around 30 million babies are born annually in malaria-prone African areas.
- **Infection Data -** Surveys in West Africa show 3.4% to 18.4% infection rates in babies under 6 months.
- **Infant Breakthrough -** This marks the first clinically proven malaria treatment for infants under 4.5 kg.
- **Treatment Gap -** Previously, such infants were treated with older children's doses, risking overdose and toxicity.
- **Vaccine Unavailability -** Malaria vaccines are not approved for the youngest infants, worsening the protection gap.
- **Trial Limitation -** Young infants are typically excluded from clinical trials due to immature liver metabolism.
- **Dose Adaptation -** Novartis developed a dose suited for neonates with support from MMV, Kaoma, and Palm Africa Consortium.
- **Child-Friendly -** The medicine dissolves in breast milk and features a sweet cherry flavor for easier administration.
- **Expert Opinion -** Researchers highlighted dosing challenges due to newborns' underdeveloped liver functions.
- **Global Access -** Novartis aims to provide the treatment on a largely not-for-profit basis in malaria-endemic areas.

Reference

Medical Dialogues | Coartem Baby - First Malaria Drug for Young Infants

FATF's Latest Report on Terrorist Financing Risks

***Prelims**: Current Events of National and International Importance*

Why in the news?

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has undertaken a project to compile the "Comprehensive Update on Terrorist Financing Risks" report, which was recently released.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
• **FATF** – It is an intergovernmental body established in 1989 by the G7 nations to develop policies to combat money laundering. • Its core mandate is to issue and update international standards that countries should adopt to prevent and address financial crimes. • One of FATF's most impactful tools is its listing system, the grey list and blacklist. - **Grey list** is those with strategic deficiencies in anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terror financing (CTF) frameworks, but which have committed to resolving them within agreed timelines. - **Blacklist** includes nations that show no meaningful commitment to improvement. • Being listed can lead to reduced foreign investment, tougher borrowing conditions, and increased scrutiny from global financial institutions. • **India and FATF** - India is an active member.

- **Global Collaboration** - The report was co-led by the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and France, with India making a significant contribution.
- **Spotlight** - For the first time, state sponsorship of terrorism was officially acknowledged in an FATF report.
- **Highlights** - India's 2022 National Risk Assessment (NRA) flagged Pakistan as a primary source of state-sponsored terrorism.
- Based on NRA findings, Indian financial institutions are required to conduct enhanced due diligence on transactions involving Pakistan.
- It is also expected that the report may also reflect the findings of the NRA's of all other countries.
- It is indicated that certain terror outfits had been and continued to receive financial and other forms of support from several national governments.
- **Wider Evidence** - The FATF report used data from delegations and open sources, showing ongoing support for terror outfits by some governments.
- **Legal Framework** - FATF explicitly stated that state funding of terrorism contradicts its standards, international conventions, UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001).
- **Security Threat** - State-sponsored terrorism is described as a long-standing threat to international peace and regional financial stability.
- **Some Illicit Channels** - One tactic includes oil smuggling from Iran to Pakistan, suspected of funding terrorism.
- **NGO Misuse** - Terror outfits like Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba use fake charities to raise and move funds.
    - These organizations are disrupting aid operations and causing Humanitarian Abuse.
- **Global Impact** - The FATF report, having higher precedence than national assessments, will pressure countries to recognize and respond to state-linked threats.
- **Financial Isolation** - Due to international scrutiny, Pakistan's transactions face

increased costs, making it less attractive for global banking.

Reference

The Hindu| FATF's Latest Report on Terrorist Financing Risks

National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2025

***Prelims**: Current events of National and International Importance*

Why in the news?

The National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2025 results were recently released, and it was surprising to see Himachal Pradesh, which ranked 21st in 2021, leap into the top five.

- **National Achievement Survey (NAS)** – It is a national-level survey that measures the learning outcomes of students in government and government-aided schools in Classes 3, 5, 8, and 10.
- It tests core subjects such as language, mathematics, and science, providing States with data to inform policy.
- **Conducted by** - Ministry of Education (Every 3 years).
- **Story of Himachal Pradesh**
- **Historical Decline** - Himachal Pradesh once had a model public education system, initiated by the first CM, Y.S. Parmar.
    - **Post-independence** – This period witnessed the expansion of schools.
    - **Post-liberalization** - Due to systemic neglect and declining quality, this legacy was weakened.
- **Policy negligence** - Contractual hiring, under-recruitment, and lowered academic standards led to public distrust, and even rural families shifted to private schools, seeking better outcomes.

Measures taken

- **Policy changes** – The Government has pursued a mix of rational restructuring and renewed commitment to public education.
- **Consolidating resources** - Demographic shifts, declining fertility rate highlighted in the NFHS-5, the administration acted to consolidate resources.
- **Building infrastructure and staff deployment** - Allowing for the better deployment of teachers and infrastructure, more than 1,000 under-enrolled schools were merged.
- **Enhanced Monitoring and Guidelines** - The school education system was unified under a single directorate from pre-primary to Class 12, enhancing focus and accountability
- **Encouraging talent and merits** – By giving opportunities for exposure visits nationally and internationally to learn from innovative practices.
- **Other efforts** - School-level decision-making encouraged.
- To encourage peer learning, share resources, and community participation, a cluster-based model of school management was adopted.

- **Driving factor** - Himachal's achievement lies in rekindling faith in the idea of public education.
- **Future step** - Himachal could now deepen its commitment by regularizing teacher appointments, expanding holistic assessments, and ensuring that rural and marginalized students are not left behind.
- **Limitations of NAS** - It measures only what is easily testable, but broader aims of education, like socio-emotional well-being of students, the quality of teaching-learning relationships, are not captured.

Reference

The Hindu| National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2025

Carcinogens in Grilled Meat

Prelims: *Science and technology | current events of national and international importance.*

Why in News?

Recently, the American Institute for Cancer Research found that grilling meat over high heat or an open flame produces cancer-causing carcinogens.

Recent Issue

- **Grilled meat** - Contains carcinogenic compounds that cause changes in the DNA.
- **Cancer** - It ***causes inflammation*** that makes you prone to cancer.
- **Carcinogens found** - Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and heterocyclic aromatic amines (HCAs)
- **Carcinogen group** – Group 1.

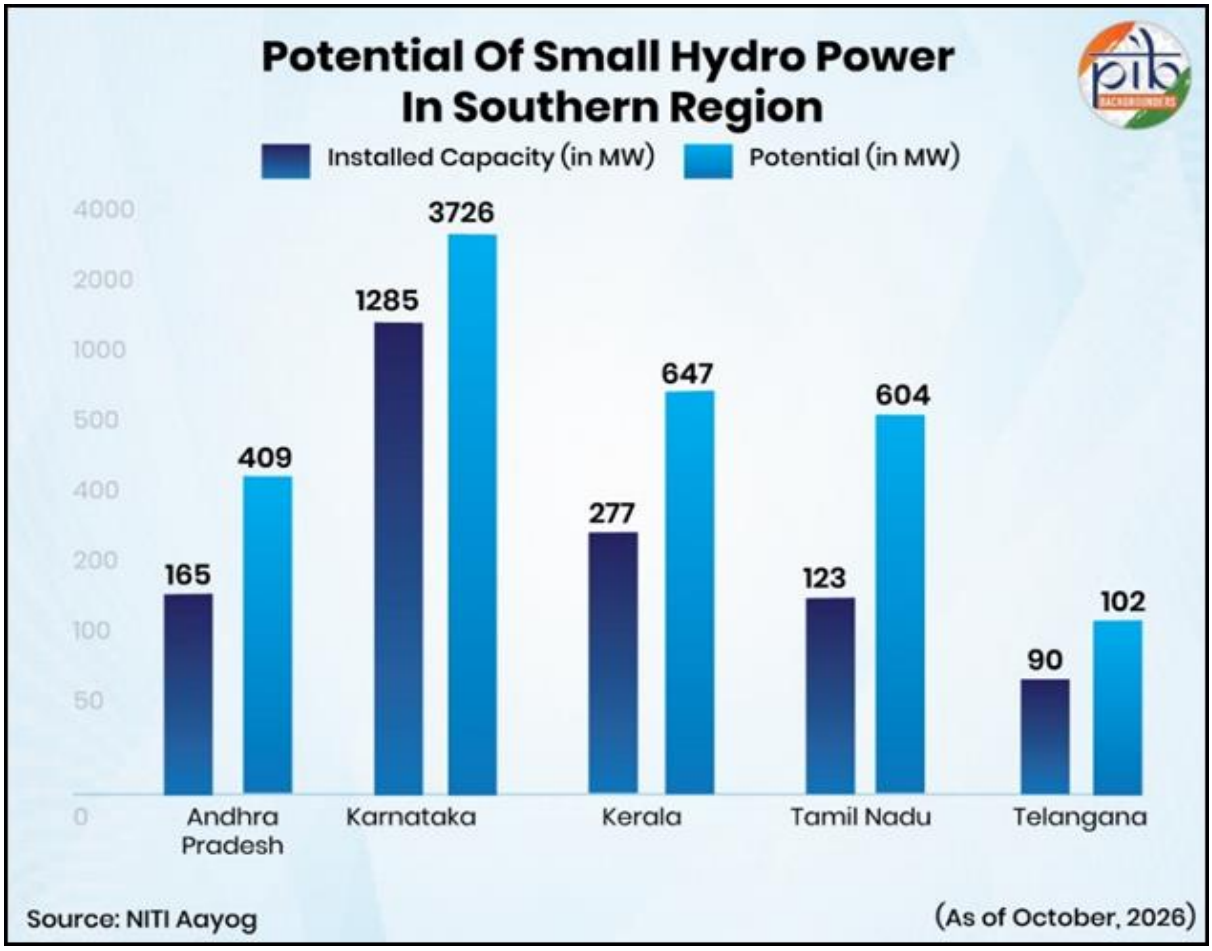
Heterocyclic aromatic amines (HCAs)

- **Formation** - Formed when amino acids (the building blocks of proteins), sugars, and creatine or creatinine (substances found in muscle) react at high temperatures.
- **Effects** - Potent *mutagens* and *carcinogens* linked to an increased risk of various cancers.

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)

- **Formation** -They are formed when fat and juices from meat grilled directly over a heated surface or open fire drip onto the surface or fire, causing flames and smoke.
- The smoke contains PAHs that then adhere to the surface of the meat.
- **Other sources** - Forest fires and volcanic eruptions.
- **Effects** - Carcinogens, mutagens, teratogens, and infertility.

Classification of carcinogens



Reducing steps

- **While grilling** - Always marinate, meat Shorten grill time, Flip the meat often.
- **Food preferences** - Never binge eat barbecue, always choose leaner meats.

Reference

Times now| Grilled meat contains carcinogens

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