

UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelimbits 27-06-2025

New Test Kit for Haemophilia A and Von Willebrand Disease

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in News?

The National Institute of Immunohaematology has indigenously developed a cost-effective point-of-care test kit for the early diagnosis of Haemophilia A, and Von Willebrand Disease.

- The test offers a promising alternative to the current standard of care, which relies on complex and costly diagnostic procedures limited to very few tertiary facilities in India.
- The World Federation for Haemophilia has shown interest in procuring these tests for deployment in countries where the disease is prevalent.
- Haemophilia A and VWD are the two most common inherited bleeding disorders.

Hemophilia A

- It is also known as **factor VIII deficiency**, is a genetic bleeding disorder caused by a deficiency or malfunction of clotting factor VIII.
- This deficiency leads to prolonged bleeding, either spontaneously or after injuries or surgery, because the blood doesn't clot properly.
- It is typically inherited in an X-linked recessive pattern, primarily affecting males.
- **Symptoms** - Symptoms can range from mild to severe, depending on the level of factor VIII in the blood.
- Mild cases may only cause prolonged bleeding after surgery or trauma, while severe cases can result in spontaneous bleeding into joints, muscles, or internal organs.
- **Treatment** - Typically involves replacing the missing clotting factor VIII, either through infusions of factor VIII concentrates or newer therapies like emicizumab.

Von Willebrand Factor (VWF)

- VWF is a *protein in the blood* that plays a crucial role in blood clotting.
- It acts like a "glue" that helps platelets (small blood cells) stick to each other and the damaged blood vessel wall, forming a plug to stop bleeding.
- **Symptoms** - Prolonged bleeding, Easy bruising, Frequent nosebleeds, Heavy menstrual periods.
- **Types of VWD** - Type 1 is the most common and typically mild, while Type 2 has subtypes with varying degrees of severity, and Type 3 is the rarest and most severe.
- **Inheritance** -VWD is typically inherited, meaning it is passed down from parents to children through genes.
- Most cases are inherited in an autosomal dominant pattern, meaning only one copy of the affected gene from either parent is enough to cause the disease.
- **Treatment - Desmopressin (DDAVP)** - This medication can help release stored VWF from the body.
- **Replacement therapy** - In some cases, purified VWF or a combination of VWF and factor VIII (another clotting factor) may be infused.
- **Other medications** - Antifibrinolytic agents may be used to help prevent or slow down bleeding.
- **Prevalence in India** - India is estimated to have 1.5 lakh people with haemophilia, but only about 27,000 are officially diagnosed
- Incidence of haemophilia A is 1 in 5,000 male births. VWD is known to affect 1% of the general population.
- The VWD is an autosomal disease. This means both males and females can get it equally. It is *not linked to gender like haemophilia*.
- Haemophilia A and Von Willebrand Disease (VWD) represent significant public health challenges in India due to underdiagnosis and limited access to diagnostic facilities.

Reference

[Economic Times | Test Kit for Haemophilia A, Von Willebrand Disease](#)

Decline in Oil Prices

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently the oil prices slipped as much as 9% which were soaring for the past week due to Iran – Israel conflict.

Reasons for Decline in Oil Prices

- **Strait of Hormuz remains open** - About **25% of the global oil supply** passes through the Strait. Iran's decision not to close it calmed the oil market, reversing last week's price spike.
- **Iran's controlled retaliation** - Iran retaliated to US involvement in the Israel-Iran conflict by attacking US military bases in Qatar, but *did not disrupt* the Strait of Hormuz — a crucial oil shipping route which reduced fears of a major supply shock.
- **Ceasefire announcement** - US President Donald Trump announced a “fully agreed” ceasefire between Iran and Israel, boosting hopes of regional stability and reducing supply concerns.
- **Restoration of market confidence** - Traders gained confidence that global oil supplies won't face significant disruption, pushing Brent crude prices down by up to 9%.

Implications of Declining Oil Prices:

- **Upstream companies (Exploration & Production)** - They are hurt by lower prices as extraction costs remain fixed.
- Profit margins shrink and stock prices of companies like **ONGC** and **Oil India** fell by 2.94% and 5.6% respectively.
- **Downstream companies (Refining & Marketing)** - Benefit from cheaper crude inputs. and higher profit margins on refined products.
- Stocks of **BPCL**, **HPCL**, and **IOC** rose by 1.92%, 3.24%, and 2.04% respectively.
- **Stable fuel prices** - Crude oil falling below \$65/barrel could translate to cheaper petrol and diesel, though cost optimisations by oil companies may be needed.
- **Reduced vulnerability** - India has diversified crude sources and built inventories.
- Many imports bypass the Strait of Hormuz, limiting exposure to West Asian disruptions.
- **Government assurance** - Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri confirmed several weeks' worth of supplies are secured, and alternate routes are being utilised to maintain fuel availability.

Reference

[The Hindu| Why oil prices have declined](#)

SEBI Proposes Revamp of MIIs to Boost Governance

Prelims: Indian economy| Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) proposed measures to strengthen the governance of market infrastructure institutions (MII) in a consultation paper.

- **MIIs** - Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) form the backbone of India's securities market and it include critical market entities like,
 - Stock Exchanges
 - Clearing Corporations
 - Depositories

Reason for revamp

- Expanding scope of India's securities market.
- Past slippages in governance of MIIs raised concerns.
- Need to strengthen oversight and ensure smooth, transparent functioning.
- Prevent adverse impacts on the broader economy.

Key SEBI Proposals:

- **Mandatory appointment of 2 Executive Directors (EDs)** - Where ED 1 is the Head of *Critical Operations* and ED 2 will be the Head of *Regulatory, Compliance, Risk Management & Investor Grievances*
- **Optional ED for commercial interests vertical** - Third vertical on *Business Development* — appointment of ED left to MIIs' discretion
- **Inclusion of EDs in governing board** - EDs for the two critical verticals will be part of the MII Governing Board
- Their appointment, re-appointment will follow processes similar to MD, including possible SEBI approval
- **Reporting obligations** - EDs must report quarterly to the Governing

Board and SEBI on their respective areas

- **Restrictions on directorships** - MDs can take non-executive directorships in Unlisted government companies (Central/State) Non-profit companies
- EDs cannot hold directorships outside the MII's subsidiaries.

Significance

- It enhances transparency and accountability in MIIs.
- It clearly segregates critical and commercial functions.
- It ensures stronger oversight of operations and investor protection.
- It aims to bolster confidence in India's financial markets.

Reference

[The Hindu| SEBI proposes revamp of MIIs to boost governance](#)

Swiss Glaciers Show Holes

Prelims: Environment | Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently scientists in Switzerland have found that many glaciers are developing large holes, making them look like Swiss cheese.

- **Holes in glaciers** - The glaciers are no longer "dynamic," meaning they aren't creating enough new ice from snowfall at higher altitudes to replace melting at lower altitudes.
- As a result, ice just melts in place, becoming weaker.
- Water flows or air movements inside the ice blocks create small holes.
- Over time, these holes grow bigger, their roofs collapse, and they become visible from the surface. **glaciers**



Reason for the Holes

- It is due to the fact the glaciers are losing strength and structure.
- Glaciers in Switzerland have been shrinking steadily, especially since the 1980s.
- The worst years for melting were 2022 and 2023.
Faster melting threatens:
 - Drinking water supplies
 - Agriculture
 - Hydropower (electricity from water)
 - River flows during dry seasons
- **Recent incidents** - A glacier collapse caused a massive mudslide in the Swiss village of Blatten.
- Some glaciers have lost up to 10 meters of vertical ice in a single year.
- **Global situation** - Similar glacier losses seen in the Himalayas and Tian Shan range in Asia.
- Global warming is pushing melting to higher altitudes.
- The Paris Climate Agreement aimed to limit warming to 1.5°C, but many glaciers will disappear even if that target is met.
- **Significance** - It reflects the tragedy of rapid climate change in real time.

Reference

[The Hindu| Swiss Glaciers Show Holes](#)

Global Tobacco Epidemic 2025 report

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently Global Tobacco Epidemic 2025 report is released by World Health Organization with the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

- **Global tobacco epidemic report** - The report is released to assess how countries are implementing tobacco control measures recommended by the WHO under the **MPOWER** strategy, which aims to reduce tobacco use and save lives.
- **Guidelines** - The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and its guidelines provide the foundation for countries to implement and manage tobacco control.
- **MPOWER** - To help make this a reality, WHO introduced the MPOWER measures.
- **MPOWER measures are,**
 - **M**- Monitor tobacco uses and prevention policies;
 - **P**- Protect people from tobacco smoke;
 - **O**- Offer help to quit tobacco;
 - **W**- Warn about dangers of tobacco;
 - **E**- Enforce bans on tobacco advertising; and
 - **R**- Raise taxes on tobacco products.
- The measures are intended to assist in the country-level implementation of effective interventions to reduce the demand for tobacco, contained in the WHO FCTC.
- The measure was started in 2007 with just 9 countries but it is now total of 110 countries now require these measures that protects 62% of the global population and 25 countries have adopted plain packaging.

Plain Packaging refers to the standardisation of tobacco product packaging to reduce its attractiveness and it is a proven tobacco control measure recommended by the WHO.

- **World No tobacco day** - To raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco and advocate for effective control policies that encourage consumers to quit, the WHO observes **World No Tobacco Day every year on May 31**.
- The theme for 2025 is "Protecting children from tobacco industry interference,"
- India is among the six countries that received 2025 Bloomberg Philanthropies Awards for Global Tobacco Control for prioritizing tobacco cessation approaches to reach a significant number of tobacco users in the

country.

- Other countries that received the award were **Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Philippines and Ukraine.**

India's Progress in Tobacco Control

- **Strong graphic health warnings** - India among top countries for best-practice health warnings on tobacco packs.
- 85% of cigarette pack surface covered with warnings which is among the world's largest.
- **Decline in tobacco use** - Overall tobacco use (including smokeless) is declining but still higher than global average:
- **38% men and 9% women** in India use tobacco.
- Global average is **35% men, 8% women.**
- Among youth (13-15 years), tobacco use is **8%**, similar among boys and girls.
- Smoking prevalence in India is **7% among adults** (2023).
- **Areas for improvement in India** - Need to ban point-of-sale tobacco ads completely.
- Raise taxes significantly to make tobacco products less affordable.
- Need to consider plain packaging for tobacco products.

Reference

[The Indian Express| WHO report on global tobacco use](#)