



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Muslim women's right to divorce

Syllabus:GS1/Society

News

- The Supreme Court will examine a 2021 ruling of the Kerala High Court affirming a Muslim woman's right to pronounce extrajudicial divorce by way of "khula".

Background

- **In 2021** a judgment by a Kerala High Court Bench dealt with the conditions of khula. It said that a Muslim woman's right to khula is "absolute" and "does not depend upon the consent or assent of the husband".
- The SC will now reconsider whether Muslim women lost their right to extrajudicial divorce after the passage of the **Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939**.
- **Extrajudicial divorces** are those that take place without the court's intervention.

What is khula?

- Khula refers to the right of a Muslim woman to unilaterally divorce her husband. This is similar to the right of talaq conferred upon Muslim men under Sharia law. The recognition of khula as a form of divorce stems directly from the Holy Qur'an.
- However, scholars differ on the manner in which khula has to take place.
 - According to the **Hanafi school** of Islamic jurisprudence, the husband's consent is a prerequisite for a valid khula.
 - The sitting Kerala H C judge, has said that a wife's right to khula is analogous to the husband's right to pronounce talaq, on being convinced of the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage.

Other forms of extrajudicial divorce available to Muslim women

- **Talaq-e-Tafwiz:** This is contract-based divorce. As Islam views marriage as a contract, the parties are free to choose the terms of their contract and decide how their marital lives will be regulated. If a husband violates any condition agreed upon at the time of marriage, the wife will be entitled to divorce without the court's intervention.
 - However, the conditions in the contract should be reasonable, and not go against public policy. For instance, if the husband marries again without the wife's permission, or neglects her, etc., are valid grounds for divorce.
- **Mubaraat:** This is a form of separation by mutual consent. The offer to dissolve the marriage may come from either side. Once both parties enter into mubara'at, all mutual rights and obligations of the spouses come to an end. Both Shi'a and Sunni sects deem this form of divorce to be irrevocable.
- **Faskh:** This is divorce through the intervention of the court, or an authority like a qazi. While khula is given by one of the spouses and mubara'at by both spouses, Faskh is decided by a third party or external authority like an arbitrator, mediator, or judge.

Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937

- The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, recognises both judicial and extrajudicial divorce. **Section 2** of the Act recognises all forms of extrajudicial divorce except Faskh.
- **Section 5** of the Act, which allows the dissolution of marriage by court in certain circumstances, allows a district judge to dissolve a marriage based on the woman's plea.
- However, despite the existence of the Sharia Act, the Hanafi school did not allow women to obtain a decree from the court to dissolve their marriage.
- To resolve this situation, two years after the passage of the 1937 Act, the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, was enacted.

Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939

- **The 1939 Act** was passed to clarify and consolidate the provisions of the law relating to the dissolution of marriage by Muslim women.
- The Act extended the right to extrajudicial divorce to all Muslim women, regardless of the school of Islamic jurisprudence they followed.
- **Section 5** of the Shariat Act was repealed and replaced with **Section 2** of the 1939 Act, which laid down nine grounds for Muslim women to obtain a decree for dissolution of marriage. These grounds included cruelty, desertion, and husband's imprisonment for seven years or more.
- The 1939 Act recognised the Faskh route of extrajudicial divorce. All other modes of extrajudicial divorce under Section 2 of the Shariat Act remained untouched.

Source: [IE](#)

India-U.K. 2+2 foreign affairs and defence

dialogue

Syllabus: GS2/ India & Foreign Relations, International Organisations & Groupings

In Context

- Recently India & the U.K. held 2+2 foreign affairs and defence dialogue in New Delhi.

The dialogue highlights

- **Indo-Pacific region:** The officials had an opportunity to exchange assessments about **recent international developments** including in the Indo-Pacific region.
 - Both sides exchanged assessments on recent international developments, including in the Indo-Pacific region, in view of the shared vision of the two countries for **peace, stability and prosperity** and for a “**free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific**”.
- **Possibilities for further collaboration:** The two sides also discussed possibilities for further collaboration, particularly in areas of trade and investment, defence, critical and emerging technologies, civil aviation, health, energy, culture and strengthening peoples connect.
 - They discussed ideas regarding counterterrorism, **HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief)** and **maritime security**.

- **Recent advancements:** Both the countries have expressed happiness on the progress made in diverse **areas of India-U.K. Roadmap 2030** including political exchanges, economic cooperation, defence and security, people to people ties, as well as regional and multilateral cooperation.

The 2+2 dialogue

- India has a 2+2 dialogue, either at the level of senior officials or ministers, with close strategic partners such as the US, Japan, Australia and Russia.
- The dialogue between India and the UK featured senior defence and foreign policy officials of the two sides.

India-UK Relations

- **About:** UK-India relationship is rooted in India's colonial history with the British and the relationship shared by both countries even after India's independence.
 - The bilateral relationship was upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2004.
- **Political:** They share a modern partnership which was upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2004.
 - The UK supports India's proposal for permanent membership of the UNSC and is also an important interlocutor for India on global platforms.
- **Economic Engagements: Trade:** from April 2021 to March 2022 was £25.7 billion, showing a 35.2% increase from the previous year.
 - India imported £8.8 billion from the UK, but it exported £16.9 billion to the country.
 - **Investment:** Indian investment in the UK included 107 projects and created 8,664 new jobs, making India the second-largest source of foreign direct investment after the US.
 - The UK is the 6th largest inward investor in India, with a cumulative equity investment of US \$82 billion (April 2000 – September 2022), accounting for approximately 5.3% of all foreign direct investment into India.
 - **FTA:** India-UK are close to concluding negotiations for a proposed India-UK Free Trade Agreement.
- **Defence:** In 2015, the two countries agreed to elevate their Defence relationship by establishing capability partnerships in strategic areas.
 - The institutionalised dialogue to discuss defence cooperation viz. Defence Consultative Group Meeting, is held annually at Defence Secretary level.
 - **Ajeya Warrior** (army-to-army biennial exercise), the **Konakan** (joint navy-to-navy annual exercise) and the **Indradhanush** (joint air-to-air exercise) happen between India and UK.
- **Education:** Over the last 10 years, the relationship has grown substantially with the introduction of bilateral mechanisms such as the India-UK Education Forum, UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), Joint Working Group on Education, Newton-Bhabha Fund and Scholarship schemes.
- **Science and Technology:** Both announced a new India-UK Global Innovation Partnership which aims to support the transfer of inclusive Indian innovations to select developing countries, starting with Africa.
 - The UK is India's second largest partner in research and innovation collaborations.

- Intentions to cooperate in the fields of Digital Technology and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- **Cultural Linkages:** Cultural linkages between India and UK are deep and extensive, arising out of shared history between the two countries.
 - There has been a gradual mainstreaming of Indian culture and absorption of Indian cuisine, cinema, languages, religion, philosophy, performing arts, etc.
 - 2017 was celebrated as the India-UK year of Culture to mark the 70th anniversary of Indian independence.
- **Indian Diaspora:** The Indian Diaspora in the UK is one of the largest ethnic minority communities in the country.
 - In the 2021 Census, 1,864,318 people in England and Wales were recorded as having Indian ethnicity, accounting for 3.1% of the population.
- **Roadmap 2030:** The “Roadmap 2030” for India-UK future relations was launched during India-UK Virtual Summit for-
 - Revitalised and dynamic connections between people;
 - Re-energised trade, investment and technological collaboration that improves the lives and livelihoods of the citizens;
 - Enhanced defence and security cooperation that brings a more secure Indian Ocean Region and Indo-Pacific and
 - India-UK leadership in climate, clean energy and health that acts as a global force for good.

Source: TH

Electoral Bonds Scheme

Syllabus: GS2/Government Policies and Interventions

News

- The Supreme Court recently referred petitions challenging the 2018 Electoral Bonds Scheme to a **five-judge Constitution Bench**.

About

- The top court is hearing petitions filed by two NGOs Common Cause and ADR, Congress leader Jaya Thakur and the CPI(M), challenging the scheme.
- While the Centre has termed the scheme “**a big step towards electoral reform**” which “will ensure transparency” and “accountability”, petitioners have contended that **it affects transparency in political funding**.

What is the Electoral Bonds Scheme?

- Announced in the 2017 Union Budget, electoral bonds are **interest-free bearer instruments used to donate money anonymously to political parties**.
- Such bonds, which are **sold in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore**, can be bought from authorised branches of the **State Bank of India (SBI)**.
- The political parties can **choose to encash such bonds within 15 days** of receiving them and fund their electoral expenses. If a party hasn’t encashed any bonds within 15 days, SBI deposits these into the **Prime Minister’s Relief Fund**.
- There is **no limit on the number of bonds an individual or company can purchase**.

- **Rationale:** It aims to **establish a transparent method of funding political parties** which is vital to the system of **free and fair elections**.
 - Political parties continue to receive **most of their funds through anonymous donations** which are shown in cash.

Why is the scheme facing a legal challenge and what are its larger criticisms?

- The scheme is challenged as **“an obscure funding system which is unchecked by any authority”**.
- Also, before the electoral bonds scheme was announced, there **was a cap on how much a company could donate to a political party: 7.5 per cent of the average net profits of a company** in the preceding three years.
 - However, the government removed this limit by amending the **Companies Act, 2013, opening the doors to unlimited funding by corporates**.
 - This amendment to the Companies Act may lead to **“private corporate interests taking precedence over the needs and rights of the people of the State in policy considerations”**.
- The **anonymity of donors under the scheme further makes the process opaque** instead of meeting its aim of bringing about transparency.
- It has been also claimed that because such bonds are sold via a **government-owned bank (SBI)**, it leaves the door open for the **government to know exactly who is funding its opponents**.
 - Critics have highlighted that **more than 75 percent of all electoral bonds have gone to the ruling party at centre in 2022**.
- Further, one of the arguments for introducing electoral bonds was **to allow common people to easily fund political parties** of their choice but **more than 90% of the bonds have been of the highest denomination (Rs 1 crore) as of 2022**.

Way Ahead

- It is to be seen what decision the Supreme court takes on the issue. But, In the case of continuance of the Scheme, **the principle of anonymity of the bond donor must be done away with**.
- The bonds should ensure that the **funds being collected by the political parties are accounted for clean money**, thereby fulfilling the tenets of free and fair elections.

Source: [IE](#)

Pharmaceutical Industry Policy after Cough Syrups Issue

Syllabus: GS 2/Health

In News

- Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) data shows that Two laboratories (Central and State) are analysing the bulk of cough syrup samples brought in for testing before they are exported.

Present Status Indian pharmaceutical industry

- It is a prominent manufacturer and exporter of medical products to the entire globe, ranging from highly developed countries to low and middle-income countries (LMIC).
- India has played a significant role in enhancing global accessibility by providing **approximately 60% of the global vaccine** supply and **20-22% of generic exports**.
 - In the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic, India has supplied essential drugs to around 185 countries”.
- The Indian pharmaceutical industry includes a network of **3,000 drug companies** and **10,500 manufacturing units**. It is projected to reach a value of US\$ 130 billion by 2030.
- India is the world’s third largest maker of drugs by volume after the U.S. and China. According to experts in the field, India’s pharma exports are set to rise to over \$20 billion this fiscal year.
- Additionally, **India’s cough syrup exports stand at \$15 million** a year.

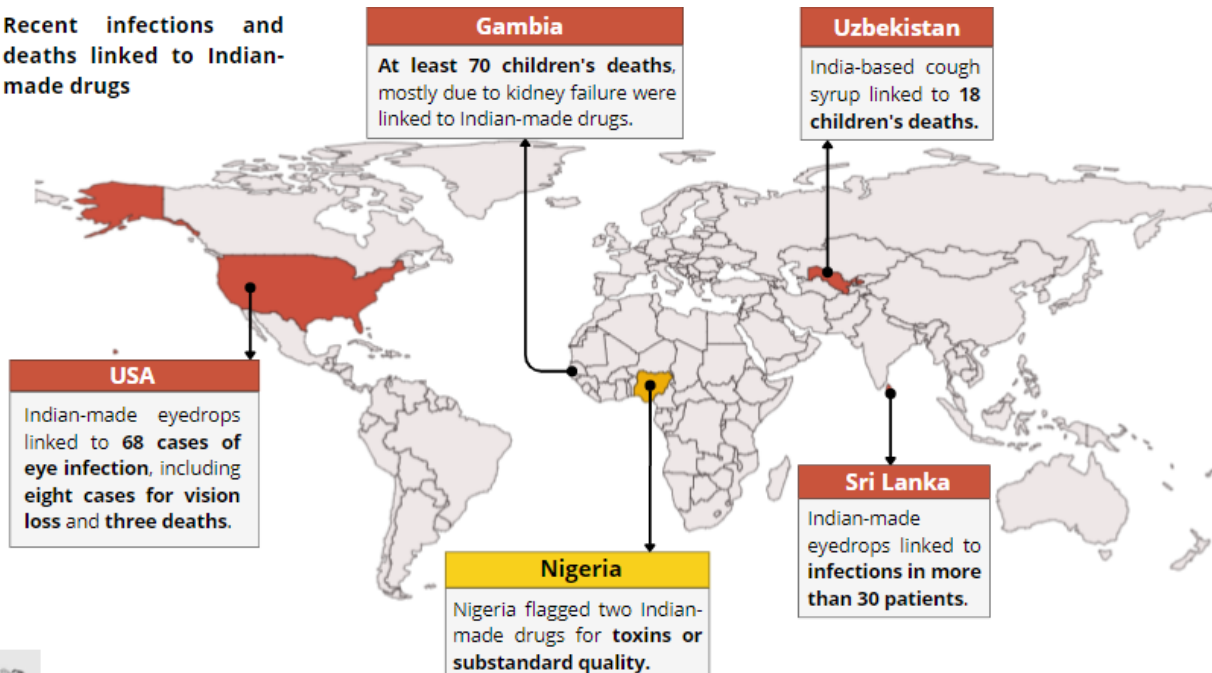
Do you know ?

- In 2019, the launch of the **New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules** further contributed to the growth of the clinical trial sector, with many choosing India as a site for global clinical trials”
- The new **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes** have also encouraged manufacturers to produce drugs in India, with the aim of supplying them to the global market.

Recent Issues

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has claimed that 300 children have died so far since August 2022, across three countries, due to substandard cough syrups made in India.
- In August 2023, The World Health Organization issued a global alert about an Indian Made cold syrup which is sold in Iraq that was contaminated with toxic chemicals.

Recent infections and deaths linked to Indian-made drugs



Related to steps

- The Union government issued a notification early this year making it compulsory from June 1 for cough syrup manufacturers to secure a certificate of analysis from government-approved laboratories.
 - The order came following a World Health Organization product alert in cases of syrup products being exported from India.
- The country has 15 Central and State-run laboratories engaged in cough syrup sample testing.
- The CDSCO and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have brought in various measures to maintain the **standard of drugs being exported** from India.
 - Regulatory measures that have been undertaken include amending the **Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945**.
 - The amendments include mandating that before the grant of a manufacturing licence, the manufacturing establishment is to be inspected jointly by the drugs inspectors of the Union government and State government.
 - Also, the **number of sanctioned posts in the CDSCO** has been significantly **increased** in the last 10 years,

- Making it mandatory for applicants to submit evidence of stability, safety, etc. to the State licensing authority before the grant of manufacturing licence by the authority

Future Outlook

- India enjoys an important position in the global pharmaceuticals sector.
- India facilitates the availability and supply of high-quality, affordable and accessible medicines around the world.
- The ongoing extensive risk-based analysis being conducted to ensure the quality of medicines. "India will never bargain on the quality of medicines

Source:[TH](#)

Cancer Cells and Chemotherapy

Syllabus: GS3/Science and Technology, GS2/ Health

Context:

- Researchers from the Netherlands Cancer Institute investigated the resistance of some cancer cells to a chemotherapy drug.

About:

- In a new study, published in ‘**Cell Reports**’, reveals some cells develop **Taxol (Paclitaxel) – resistance**.
 - **Taxol (Paclitaxel) is a type of chemotherapy.**
- Researchers found that the cell's **sensitivity to Taxol**, including its ability to resist Taxol's anti-cancer effects, **related to the location of the ATP Binding Cassette Subfamily B Member 1 (ABCB1) gene inside the cell's nucleus.**
- It highlights the need for more research to uncover the ways in which cancer cells express or silence genes, and opens the door for researchers to develop new ways to ensure anti-cancer drugs remain potent and patients recover faster.

About Cancer:

- In our body, cell growth and differentiation is highly controlled and regulated. **In cancer cells, there is breakdown of these regulatory mechanisms.**
- Normal cells show a property called **contact inhibition** by virtue of which contact with other cells inhibits their uncontrolled growth.
- Cancer cells appear to have lost this property. As a result of this, **cancerous cells just continue to divide giving rise to masses of cells called tumours.**

Tumours:

- These are of two types: **benign and malignant.**
 - **Benign tumours** normally **remain confined to their original location** and do not spread to other parts of the body and cause little damage.
 - **The malignant tumours** are a **mass of proliferating cells called neoplastic or tumour cells**, which grow very rapidly, invading and **damaging the surrounding normal tissues.** **Metastasis** is the most feared property of malignant tumours.

Causes of cancer:

- Transformation of normal cells into cancerous neoplastic cells may be induced by physical, chemical or biological agents, called **carcinogens.**
- **Ionising radiations** like X-rays and Gamma rays and **non-ionizing radiations** like UV cause DNA damage leading to **neoplastic transformation.**
- The **chemical carcinogens** present in tobacco smoke have been identified as a major cause of lung cancer.

Cancer detection and diagnosis:

- **Early detection** of cancers is essential, which is **based on biopsy and histopathological studies** of the tissue and blood and bone marrow tests for increased cell counts in the case of Leukemias.
- **Techniques** like **radiography** (use of X-rays), **CT** (computed tomography) and **MRI** (magnetic resonance imaging).

Treatment of cancer:

- The common approaches for treatment of cancer are **surgery, radiation therapy and immunotherapy.**
- Most cancers are treated by combination of surgery, radiotherapy and **chemotherapy.**

Chemotherapy and its impact:

- Chemotherapy eliminates the cancer cells **without affecting other non-cancerous cells** nearby that are not dividing.
 - A **characteristic feature** of cancer cells is that they **divide rapidly**, in uncontrolled fashion. **Anti-cancer drugs – i.e. chemotherapeutic agents** – work by stalling or blocking this proliferation.
 - When the division of a cancer cell is arrested, it generally responds by triggering a pathway of programmed cell death, called **apoptosis**.
- But, any tissue with a significant number of **normal cells** (for example, cells in the digestive tract, bone marrow, and hair follicles etc) are also dividing and **affected by chemotherapeutic agents and suffer apoptosis**.
 - This cell death underlies the unpleasant side-effects of chemotherapy, such as painful inflammation of the oral cavity and the gut, and nausea, diarrhoea, anaemia, and hair loss.

The Mechanism of Resistance:

- The researchers used cells from the human eye retinal pigment epithelium, and found its ability to resist Taxol's anti-cancer effects.
 - A toxin-remover protein, **Permeability Glycoprotein (P-gp)** became resistant to the anti-cancer drug Taxol.
- The P-gp efflux pump made from **RNA was responsible for Taxol-resistance**.
 - **Only the RNA, and not the DNA**, enters the cytoplasm where it 'instructs' the cellular machinery on the way to link different amino acids to form the protein encoded by a gene.

Do you know?

- The **nucleus** is the part of the cell that houses the **DNA and the associated proteins**. Genes are segments of a DNA molecule.
- The **DNA** contains the archival copy of a gene whereas the cell uses the **RNA** as the working copy.

Solution:

- It is necessary to find the dose of a drug that effectively kills cancer cells but whose side-effects are not unbearable for the patient.
- Researchers have tried to achieve it by developing **Antibody-Drug Conjugates (ADCs) against some cancers.**
 - An ADC is a drug attached to an antibody that recognises a protein found only on the cancer cells and non-cancer cells are bypassed.

[Source: TH](#)

Palliative care

Syllabus: GS2/Issues Related to Health

News:

- Many Indians are either a hospital bill away from poverty or too poor to access healthcare. Nearly **5.5 crore people fall below the poverty line every year** due to out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure.

About:

- Out of **5.5 crore**, 3.8 crore people become poor only because of the **expenditure on medicines.**
- Further, **India is becoming the epicentre for non-communicable diseases** and several of the patients with these diseases, like cancer and cardiac disease eventually reach an incurable stage.

Palliative care:

- Palliative care is an approach that **improves the quality of life of patients** and their families who are facing problems associated with **life-threatening illness** like cancers, end-stage kidney disease and debilitating brain disorders.
- **It prevents and relieves suffering through the early identification,** correct assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, whether physical or psychosocial.
- Addressing suffering involves **taking care of issues beyond physical symptoms.** Palliative care uses a **team approach** to support patients and their caregivers.
 - This includes **addressing practical needs and providing bereavement counselling.** It offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death.

The Importance of Palliative Care:

- Palliative care is different from other medical specialities as it focuses on **alleviating uncontrolled symptoms of the incurable illnesses.**
- It takes into consideration **not just the physical dimension of health but also actively looks at the social and economic realities** of the patient and the family.
- Early initiation of palliative care in patients with advanced disease has **shown to reduce health expenditure by up to 25%.**
 - Early palliative care not only improves quality of life for patients but also **reduces unnecessary hospitalizations and use of health-care services.**

- **Palliative care provided through home-based care further reduces the cost** of seeking care as home-bound patients no longer have to travel to seek healthcare.

Issues:

- **Insufficient access to palliative care:** Each year an estimated **56.8 million people are in need of palliative care**, most of whom live in low- and middle-income countries.
- **Lack of investment in palliative care: Unplanned and abysmal funding** has also been a barrier to public health centres providing palliative care services and is **not covered under most insurance schemes in India.**
 - According to a **WHO survey in 2019:** funding for palliative care was available in 68% of countries and only 40% of countries reported that the services reached at least half of patients in need.
- **Low awareness:** Despite existing for nearly four decades, awareness regarding palliative care in India, both among healthcare workers and the general public is low.
- **Palliative care is not a wealth-generating speciality but an expense-saving one:** The increasingly privatised Indian health system has by and large chosen to neglect the speciality barring a few exceptions.
 - The unavailability of such care services in the public and private setup has thus resulted in palliative care needs of the country being **predominantly met by private non-profit organisations.**

Other barriers to palliative care include:

- **Training on palliative care** for health professionals is often limited or non-existent.
- **Misconceptions** about palliative care, such as that it is only for patients with cancer, or for the last weeks of life.
- **The rising cost of health:** Non-communicable diseases will push more and more people into poverty as they require lifelong treatment and periodic health check-ups.
 - This often leads to **‘financial toxicity’** wherein there is a risk of bankruptcy, decreased treatment satisfaction, foregoing or delays in seeking further medical care, poor quality of life, and poor survival.
- With **only 1.35% of the gross domestic product (GDP)** being spent on government health services in India, **patients bear most of the health expenses.**
 - The **cost of travel, purchasing medicines** that many a time are out of stock in government pharmacies, and **loss of wages** due to the absence from work contribute to the financial toxicity.

What needs to be done?

- National health systems should incorporate palliative care in the continuum of care for people, linking it to **prevention, early detection and treatment programmes.**
- **Health system policies** should integrate palliative care services into the structure and financing of national health-care systems at all levels of care.
- **Policies for strengthening and expanding human resources**, including training of existing health professionals, embedding palliative care into the core

curricula of all new health professionals, as well as educating volunteers and the public are needed.

- **A Medicines Policy** is needed to ensure the availability of essential medicines for managing symptoms, in particular for the relief of pain and respiratory distress.

Way Ahead:

- It is the **moral obligation of the health system to take care of people**, especially when they are suffering from life-long and life-limiting illnesses. It's high time public and private healthcare providers realised the high returns of investing in palliative care and prioritised it.
- Palliative care needs to be provided in accordance with the **principles of universal health coverage**. All people, irrespective of income, disease type or age, should have access to a nationally- determined set of basic health services, including palliative care.
- **Financial and social protection systems need to take into account the human right to palliative care** for poor and marginalized population groups.

Source: [TH](#)

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Syllabus: GS-3/Poverty, Economy

Context

- The **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty** is celebrated annually on **October 17** by the **United Nations**.

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

- **Aim:**
 - To raise awareness about the **struggles of people living in poverty**.
 - It serves as a reminder that poverty is a complicated, multifaceted problem that affects factors such as access to health care, education, and social inclusion, rather than simply a lack of income.
 - The day highlights the value of cooperation, human rights, and social justice in the fight against poverty.
- **Historical Background:**
 - The event was first commemorated in **Paris, France, in 1987** at the **Human Rights and Liberties Plaza** to honor victims of poverty, hunger, violence, and fear.
 - The commemorative stone was unveiled by **Joseph Wresinski, founder of the International Movement ATD Fourth World**.
 - Then, in **1992, the United Nations (UN)** officially designated October 17 as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.
- **Theme for 2023: “Decent Work and Social Protection: Putting Dignity in Practice for All”** which aims for universal access to decent work and social protection as a way to uphold human dignity for all people.
- **Significance:**
 - This day holds immense significance as it serves as a global reminder of the ongoing battle against poverty in all its dimensions.

- It underscores the commitment to addressing the profound social, economic, and human rights issues that stem from poverty while emphasizing the need for collective action to alleviate the suffering of those affected by this challenge.
- This day calls for sustainable and inclusive development that ensures no one is left behind, as we strive for a world where poverty no longer hinders individuals from leading lives of dignity, opportunity, and hope.

Poverty Across the Globe

- According to the **United Nations, 8.4% of the world's population**, or as many as 670 million people, were living in extreme poverty at the **end of 2022**.
- An estimated **7% of the global population** – around 575 million people – could still find themselves trapped in extreme **poverty by 2030**.

What is Poverty?

- According to the World Bank, Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being and comprises many dimensions.
 - It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity.
 - Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life.

Committees in India so far on poverty estimation

- The working group of 1962
- V N Dandekar and N Rath in 1971
- Y K Alagh in 1979
- D T Lakdawala in 1993
- Suresh Tendulkar in 2009
- C Rangarajan in 2014.
- The government did not take a call on the report of the Rangarajan Committee; therefore, poverty is measured using the Tendulkar poverty line.

Government's initiatives in this context

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)
- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay – Gramin Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G)
- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)
- Shyama Prasad Mukherjee National RuRBAN Mission (SPMRM) and National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), and programs of Department of Land Resources, viz., Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (WDC-PMKSY).
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
- Schemes for Financial Assistance:
 - Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi
 - Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
 - Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

Source: [LM](#)

Surgical-site Infections (SSI)

Syllabus: GS2/Health Issues

Context:

- A study was published on Surgical Site Infections in the **Journal of Hospital Infection (a healthcare infection society based in London)**.

Major Findings of the Study:

- Safety measures before surgery aren't just to save lives, they can also significantly lower the health bill if followed in letter and spirit.
- Investing in safe surgeries could significantly reduce the costs associated with surgeries in **low-to-middle-income countries like India**.
- The surgical site infections occurred in **27% of contaminated-dirty surgeries** and **7% of clean-contaminated surgeries**.
- The healthcare costs associated with surgical site infections following **clean-contaminated surgery (higher by 75%)** were higher than in the case of **contaminated dirty surgery (67%)**.
- **India had the highest increase in healthcare costs** associated with surgical site infections following clean-contaminated surgeries, at Rs 46,000. It also featured the lowest increase in healthcare costs for surgical site infections after contaminated-dirty surgeries, at Rs 20,000.

What is a Surgical Site Infection (SSI)?

- It is a common complication in surgeries worldwide which **occurs at the site of a surgery in the body**.
- It can develop on any part of the body, but it most commonly affects the incision site.
- These infections can range from mild to severe and may involve the different layers of the body.
- It could be a superficial skin infection or a deeper one, involving tissues.
- According to a WHO report of 2018, about 11% of patients who undergo surgery contract such infections.

Types:

- **Superficial incisional SSI** is limited to the skin area where an incision was made.
- **Deep incisional SSI** where the infection develops below the incised skin and spreads to affect surrounding muscles and other soft tissue.
- **Organ or space SSI** can disseminate to any part of the body to affect organs or organ spaces.

Causes of Surgical Site Infection:

- Infections after surgery are caused by **germs**. The most common of these include the bacteria **Staphylococcus, Streptococcus, and Pseudomonas**. Germs can infect a surgical wound through various forms of contact, such as from the touch of a contaminated caregiver or surgical instrument, etc.

Symptoms of Surgical Site Infection

- The symptoms of surgical site infection typically appear **5 to 7 days post-procedure**.

- The most common symptoms are **Spreading Erythema (Reddening of the skin usually in patches), localized pain, Pus or discharge, and persistent pyrexia (Fever).**

Treatment

- Most SSIs can be treated with **antibiotics.**
- Sometimes **additional surgery or procedures** may be required to treat the SSI.
- During recovery, make sure **to wash your hands** before and after touching the wound.

Source: [TH](#)

Facts In News Sharda Temple

Syllabus: GS1/Art and Culture

Context

- The Navratri pujas have been held in Sharda Temple in Kashmir this year for the first time after 1947.

Sharda Peeth Temple:

- It is located **in Neelum Valley in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)** and falls in the **Kupwara District of Jammu and Kashmir** along the Line of Control (LoC).
- It is **one of the 18 Maha Shakti Peethas** and is considered to be the abode of Hindu Goddess Saraswati.
 - Goddess Sharada was referred to as **Kashmira-Puravasani.**
- The temple was also once regarded as one of the foremost **centres of higher learning of Vedic works, scriptures and commentaries.**
 - It was considered to be at par with the ancient seats of learning at Nalanda and Takshila.
- This temple also links with the **Sharda-civilization and Sharda-script**, which is considered as the **original script of our Kashmir.**



Source: [PIB](#)

Amendment to Aircraft Rules, 1937

Syllabus: GS3/Economy

In News

- Recently, the Amendment to Aircraft Rules, 1937, was notified.

About

- The Amendment is a result of **substantial consultations with stakeholders** in the industry, aimed at providing the **necessary reform measures** to strengthen the existing regulatory safety and security framework.

- These amendments align **India's aviation regulations with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs)** and international best practices.

Amendments

- The validity of licenses in relation to **Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL) and Commercial Pilot License (CPL) holders** has been increased from **five years to ten years**.
 - This change is expected to **reduce administrative burden on pilots** and aviation authorities like DGCA, promoting a **more streamlined and efficient licensing process**.
- To address the concern of the display of "**false lights**" in the vicinity of an aerodrome, "light" encompasses **lantern lights, wish kites, and laser lights**.
 - The government's jurisdiction over those exhibiting such lights has been extended from **5 kilometres to 5 nautical miles around an aerodrome**.
 - It is made explicit that the **government possesses the authority** to take action against individuals displaying lights that disrupt the safe operation of aircraft or pose hazards to the operating crew.
 - Should such lights remain unattended for 24 hours, the **government is empowered to enter the location and extinguish them**.
 - Simultaneously, the **matter shall be reported to the relevant police station for legal action under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**.
 - When the **source of the observed light is unidentifiable** or if it shifts locations, the airport or airline operator is obligated to promptly report the incident to the local police station, **initiating potential criminal proceedings**.
- Rule 118 for **validation of foreign licenses** has been removed as being redundant. This change signifies aligning the regulations with the evolving needs of the aviation sector.
- A clause to **liberalise the recency and competency requirements** while ensuring continued **competence for Air Traffic Controller License holders** has been added under Schedule III.
 - Subsequently, they **must undergo a skill assessment** for their respective rating within ten consecutive days of commencing these exercises.
- **Significance:** These amendments represent a significant step towards **strengthening aviation safety, security, and the ease of doing business** within the aviation sector in India.

Source: [PIB](#)

International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)

Syllabus: Miscellaneous

In News

- The Union government has revoked the suspension order of International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) Director K.S. James, passed in late July citing irregularities in recruitments.

About IIPS

- It serves as a **regional Institute for Training and Research** in Population Studies for the **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region**.
- It was **established in Mumbai in 1956**, till 1970 it was known as the Demographic Training and Research Centre (DTRC) and till 1985 it was known as the International Institute for Population Studies (IIPS).
- The Institute was re-designated to its present title in 1985 to facilitate the expansion of its academic activities and was **declared as a 'Deemed to be University the UGC Act, 1956 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India**.
- It also conducts **vital studies** such as the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), the Assessment of National Rural Health Mission, and the Global Adult Tobacco Survey.

Source: [TH](#)







Five sports included in Los Angeles 2028 Olympics

Syllabus: Current Events of National and International Importance

In News

- The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** Session has approved the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics organising committee's proposal for the inclusion of 5 additional sports in the sporting event.

About the announcements

-  Baseball/ softball,  cricket,  flag football,  lacrosse and  squash have been officially included as additional sports on the programme for the **Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028**.
 - Flag football and squash will be making their Olympic debut in LA, while baseball /softball, cricket and lacrosse will make a comeback to the event.
 - Baseball /softball have been part of the programme at several editions of the Olympic Games, most recently at Tokyo 2020
 - Cricket was on the programme for the Olympic Games Paris 1900 and Lacrosse was included on the programme at St Louis 1904 and London 1908.

The International Olympic Committee

- It is a not-for-profit, civil, non-governmental, international organisation made up of volunteers which is committed to building a better world through sport.
- It redistributes more than 90 per cent of its income to the wider sporting movement, which means that every day the equivalent of USD 4.2 million goes to help athletes and sports organisations at all levels around the world.

Do you know ?

- The **modern Olympic Games** are the world's foremost multi-sports event.
- They are the largest sporting celebration in terms of the number of sports on the programme, the number of athletes present and the number of people from different nations gathered together at the same time, in the same place, in the spirit of friendly competition.
- **Organised every four years**, they include a summer and a winter edition.
- Athletes from all 206 National Olympic Committees and the IOC Olympic

Refugee Team are eligible to compete in a wide range of sporting disciplines and events, watched by a worldwide audience.

- **Timeline**

- The **first edition of the modern Olympic Games** was staged in **Athens, Greece, in 1896**, while the **first winter edition** was held in **Chamonix, France, in 1924**.
- Since 1994, the Olympic Games have alternated between a summer and winter edition every two years within the four-year period of each Olympiad.

Source: [News on air](#)

INS Beas

Syllabus: GS3/Defence

Context:

- The Union Ministry of Defence signs a contract with Cochin Shipyard Limited for **Mid Life Upgrade and Re-Powering of INS Beas.**

About:

- The INS Beas aims to join the active fleet of the Indian Navy with a modernised weapon suite and upgraded combat capability after completion of mid-life upgrade and re-powering **in 2026.**
 - **INS Beas** is the **first of Brahmaputra Class Frigates** to be **re-powered from Steam to Diesel Propulsion.**
- The project would involve more than 50 MSMEs and would lead to generation of employment for more than 3500 personnel.
- The project will be a proud flag bearer of Atmanirbhar Bharat in consonance with the Make-in-India initiative of the Government of India.

INS Beas:

- It was commissioned on 11 July 2005 and since then it has been one of the leading frigates of the Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy.
- It is the **third of the Brahmaputra Class guided missile frigate**, and was built at the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd.
 - It was a **reincarnation of the earlier version of the Beas** having illustriously served **during 1960-1992.**
- It can **speed up beyond 30 knots** and could cover in **excess of 4,500 nautical miles without refill.**
- **Motto: 'Yudhmeva Vijayam'** (victory in every battle).



Source: [PIB](#)

Dengue

Syllabus:GS3/Science and Technology, GS2/ Health

News

- In 2023 close to 95,000 dengue cases were recorded in India until September leading to over 90 deaths.

What is Dengue?

- Dengue is a viral infection caused by the **dengue virus (DENV)**, transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. It is more common in tropical and subtropical climates.
- **DENV is an RNA virus** of the **Flaviviridae family** with four serotypes (DENV-1 to 4). Infection with one serotype provides lifelong immunity to that

type, but subsequent infections with different serotypes can lead to severe, life-threatening forms of the disease.

- **Symptoms:** Most people who get dengue won't have symptoms. But for those that do, the most common symptoms are high fever (40°C/104°F), severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pains, nausea, vomiting, swollen glands, rash.

Transmission

- **Vector:** The virus is transmitted to humans through the bites of infected female mosquitoes, primarily the **Aedes Aegypti mosquito**.
- **Human-to-mosquito transmission:** After feeding on a DENV-infected person, the virus replicates in the mosquito midgut before disseminating to secondary tissues, including the salivary glands.
- **Extrinsic incubation period (EIP):** The time taken from ingesting the virus to actual transmission to a new host is termed the extrinsic incubation period (EIP). The EIP takes about 8–12 days when the ambient temperature is between 25–28°C. Once infectious, the mosquito can transmit the virus for the rest of its life.
- **Other transmission modes:** There is a possibility of maternal transmission of Dengue (from a pregnant mother to her baby), transmission via blood products, organ donation and transfusions.

Burden of Dengue

- **Global Scenario:** About half of the world's population is at risk of dengue with an estimated **100–400 million** infections occurring each year. Dengue outbreaks occur in many countries of the world, including in the Americas, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific Islands.
- **Indian Scenario:** In India **West Bengal** recorded the highest share of cases — 11% of India's total in the 15-year period between 2008 and 2022. It was followed by Punjab (8.9%) and Uttar Pradesh (7.1%).

Prevention

- There is no specific antiviral treatment for dengue, so prevention relies on controlling mosquito populations and raising public awareness.
- The mosquitoes that spread dengue are active during the day. The best way of protection is to protect yourself from mosquito bites.
- **Dengvaxia:** So far one vaccine, Dengvaxia, has been approved and licensed in some countries. However, only persons with evidence of past dengue infection can be protected by this vaccine.

Source: [TH](#)

Angel tax for start-ups

Syllabus: Prelims/Economic Development

News:

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has recently directed its officers to not carry out scrutiny of **angel tax provisions for start-ups** recognised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

About:

- The tax department has asked its field officials **to not do verification for the recognised start-ups** for cases pertaining to Section 56 (2) (viib) of the **Income-tax Act**, which was amended in the Finance Act, 2023 **bringing in non-resident investors also under the angel tax levy.**
- Citing issuance of scrutiny notices to start-up companies under the **CASS (Computer-Assisted Scrutiny Selection)**, the CBDT in its directive has stated that procedure has been laid out for the assessment of such startup companies, which have been recognized by the DPIIT and **no verification is required for such start-ups** for notices related to the amended provisions for angel tax.

Angel tax:

- Angel tax is an **income tax** (at the rate of **30.6 percent**) levied when an **unlisted company issues shares to an investor at a price higher than its fair market value.**
- It was **first introduced in 2012 to deter the generation and use of unaccounted money** through the subscription of shares of a closely held company at a value that is higher than the fair market value of the firm's shares.
- Earlier, it was imposed only on investments made by a resident investor. However the **Finance Act 2023 proposed to extend angel tax even to non-resident investors.**

Changes made for angel tax in Budget 2023-24:

- The provision earlier stated that when an unlisted company, such as a start-up, receives equity investment from a resident for issue of shares that exceeds the face value of such shares, it will be counted as income for the start-up and be **subject to income tax under the head 'Income from other Sources'** for the relevant financial year.
- With the amendment, the government had proposed to also **include foreign investors in the ambit**, meaning that when a start-up raises funding from a foreign investor, that too will now be counted as income and be taxable.
- The **DPIIT-recognised startups were excluded from the angel tax levy.**
- In May 2023, the Finance Ministry had **exempted investors from 21 countries** including the US, UK and France from the levy of angel tax for non-resident investment in unlisted Indian start-ups.
 - However, the **list excluded investment from countries like Singapore, Netherlands and Mauritius** – which have traditionally been key geographies for start-ups to raise money.

Source: [IE](#)

White Cane Day

Syllabus:Miscellaneous

News

- The Department of Empowerment of persons with disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, observed White Cane Day.

About

- World White Cane Day is celebrated every year on October 15. The day is observed to promote accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities and to increase public awareness of the rules of conduct for the blind.
- For visually impaired people, the white cane represents independence and mobility. It helps a visually impaired person move around freely and complete daily tasks.

Source: [PIB](#)