

29 – 07 – 2022

News: World Hepatitis Day

World Hepatitis Day

- World Hepatitis Day is **observed each year on 28th July** to enhance **awareness of viral hepatitis**.
- The theme for the year 2022 is **“Bringing hepatitis care closer to you”**.
- It aims to **highlight the need to bring hepatitis care closer to primary health care facilities, and so communities, to ensure better access to treatment and care**.

Hepatitis

- Hepatitis is an **inflammation of the liver**.
- The condition can be self-limiting or **can progress to fibrosis (scarring), cirrhosis or liver cancer**.
- It **can be acute** (inflammation of the liver that presents with sickness — jaundice, fever, vomiting) **or chronic** (inflammation of the liver that lasts more than six months, but essentially showing no symptoms).

- Hepatitis viruses are the most common cause of hepatitis in the world but other infections, toxic substances (e.g. alcohol, certain drugs), and autoimmune diseases can also cause hepatitis.
- There are 5 main hepatitis viruses, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E.
- Other viruses may also cause it, such as the varicella virus that causes chicken pox.
- Other causes include drugs and alcohol abuse, fat buildup in the liver (fatty liver hepatitis) or an autoimmune process in which a person's body makes antibodies that attack the liver (autoimmune hepatitis).
- Hepatitis is the only communicable disease where mortality is showing an increasing trend.
- Hepatitis A and E are typically caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water.
- Hepatitis B, C and D usually occur as a result of parenteral contact with infected body fluids.
- Common modes of transmission for these viruses include receipt of contaminated blood or blood products, invasive medical procedures using contaminated equipment and for hepatitis B transmission from mother to baby at birth, from family member to child, and also by sexual contact.

- Hepatitis D virus (HDV) infections occur only in those who are infected with HBV.
- The dual infection of HDV and HBV can result in a more serious disease and worse outcome.
- Hepatitis E virus (HEV) is mostly transmitted through consumption of contaminated water or food.
- HEV is a common cause of hepatitis outbreaks in developing parts of the world and is increasingly recognized as an important cause of disease in developed countries.
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is mostly transmitted through exposure to infective blood.
- This may happen through transfusions of HCV-contaminated blood and blood products, contaminated injections during medical procedures, and through injection drug use. Sexual transmission is also possible, but is much less common.

Treatment

- Hepatitis A and E are self-limiting (i.e., they go away on their own) and do not require antiviral treatment.

- Hepatitis A and B vaccines are available, but Hepatitis C and D vaccines are not.
- Hepatitis B vaccines provide protection from Hepatitis D virus infection.
- For Hepatitis E, a promising vaccine is in the works.
- Effective medications for Hepatitis B and C are available.
- Antiviral medications can be used to treat chronic hepatitis B infection.
- Treatment can slow cirrhosis progression, lower the risk of liver cancer, and improve long-term survival.
- Hepatitis B is included under India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) which provides free of cost vaccination against eleven (excluding Hepatitis B) vaccine preventable diseases. i.e. Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Pneumonia and Meningitis due to Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib), Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Rotavirus diarrhoea.
- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand became the first four countries in the World Health Organization's South East Asia region to have successfully controlled Hepatitis B.
- World Hepatitis Day is commemorated yearly on 28th July to increase awareness and understanding of viral hepatitis as a global priority.
- Recently, an automated coronavirus testing device named 'COBAS 6800' was launched which can also detect viral Hepatitis B & C, among others.

- It can be noted that **only for four diseases** viz. **HIV-AIDS** (1st December), **TB** (24th March), **Malaria** (25th April), and **Hepatitis**, the World Health Organization (WHO) **officially endorses disease-specific global awareness days**.

Global Scenario

- **Approximately 354 million people are suffering from hepatitis B and C.**
- **Southeast Asia has 20% of the global morbidity burden of hepatitis.**
- **About 95% of all hepatitis-related deaths are due to cirrhosis and liver cancers caused by the hepatitis B and C virus.**

Indian Scenario

- **Viral hepatitis, caused by hepatitis viruses A through E, still remains a major public health problem in India.**
- **India has “intermediate to high endemicity” for Hepatitis B surface antigen and an estimated 40 million chronic HBV infected people, constituting approximately 11% of the estimated global burden.**
- **Population prevalence of chronic HBV infection in India is around 3-4 %.**

News: International Tiger Day – 29th of July

International Tiger Day

- Global Tiger Day, often called **International Tiger Day**, is an annual celebration to raise awareness for tiger conservation, held annually on 29 July.
- It was **created in 2010 at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit in Russia**.
- The goal of the day is to **promote a global system for protecting the natural habitats of tigers and to raise public awareness and support for tiger conservation issues**.
- The **Heads of the Governments of Tiger Range countries** at St. Petersburg, Russia, had resolved to **double tiger numbers across their global range by 2022 by signing the St. Petersburg declaration (or simply called T*2) on tiger conservation**.
- **During the same meeting it was also decided to celebrate 29th July as Global Tiger Day across the world**, which is since being celebrated to spread and generate awareness on tiger conservation.
- There are currently **13 tiger range countries - India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam**.

Recent developments

- India is now reporting increased tiger numbers, and a recent International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) assessment suggests that tiger numbers have increased by 40% since 2005.

Numbers are up, but still a cause of concern

- Populations that are smaller than 100 breeding individuals have a high probability of extinction.
- At the same time, for populations to persist, they should be part of larger landscapes with other such populations that are connected.
- Small and isolated populations face a high probability of extinction. This is because small populations are subject to random events. These chance events may cause them to lose advantageous genetic variants, while other, detrimental genetic variants might increase in frequency. This process is called genetic drift.
- Also, individuals in small populations are more likely to be related, leading to inbreeding. This exposes the many slightly disadvantageous genetic variants that are present in all genomes. When expressed together, these detrimental genetic variants cause inbreeding depression, and reduced survival and reproduction of inbred individuals.

- A closer look at the distribution of tigers across their range shows that most tiger ‘populations’ are smaller than 100. On their own, most tiger populations do not have a high chance of survival.

Royal Bengal Tiger

- Royal Bengal Tiger is also known as Bengal Tiger and Indian Tiger.
- Tigers are solitary animals. They have characteristic black stripes on their orange colour coat. However, there are white tigers with bright white colour fur and black stripes.
- They are excellent hunters and have the ability to run, climb trees, jump and swim.
- Tiger is the biggest of all big cats living in the world. An average adult tiger usually weighs around 300 kg.
- CITES protection: Appendix I.
- Wildlife protection act: Schedule I.
- IUCN Red list: Endangered.
- It is distributed over India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan.
- Threats faced by the Tiger include poaching, Habitat destruction, Prey loss and Human conflict.

- Conservation programs include Project Tiger, Tiger census, MsStripes, TX2 Goal, Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) awards and Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP by IUCN).
- The Tiger Census is conducted every 4 years (Quadrennial) by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- More than 80% of the world's wild tigers are in India, and it's crucial to keep track of their numbers.
- Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of tigers (526) followed by Karnataka (524) and Uttarakhand (442).
- Government recently proposed to merge the Elephant Census and Tiger Census.
- Tiger was included in the "Not all animals migrate by choice" campaign by Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).

News: India will become 'Vishwa Guru' only through SAARC

- Former Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday said the route for India to become a 'Vishwa Guru' is through J&K and SAARC by initiating a dialogue with neighbours, including Pakistan.

South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC)

- Charter signed: 8th December 1985- SAARC charter in Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Head Quarters: Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Members: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Every neighbouring nation of India sharing land border except China and Myanmar is a member of SAARC.
- Observers: Australia, China, the European Union, Iran, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mauritius, Myanmar and The United States of America.
- SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 3.8% (US\$2.9 trillion) of the global economy.

Structure of SAARC

- **Council** – It is the apex policy-making body. The council is represented by government **heads of the respective member countries**.
- **Council of Ministers** – The Council of Ministers comprises **the foreign ministers** and they meet generally two times annually

Areas of Cooperation

- Human Resource Development and Tourism
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Environment, Natural Disasters and Biotechnology
- Economic, Trade and Finance
- Social Affairs
- Information and Poverty Alleviation
- Energy, Transport, Science and Technology
- Education, Security and Culture and Others

Objectives of SAARC

- To promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life.

- To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials.
- To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia.
- To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems.
- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields.
- To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries.
- To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and
- To cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

Principal Organs

- Meeting of Heads of State or Government. Meetings are held at the Summit level, usually on an annual basis.

- Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries. The Committee provides overall monitoring and coordination, determines priorities, mobilizes resources, and approves projects and financing.

SAARC Specialized Bodies

- **SAARC Development Fund (SDF):** Its primary objective is **funding of project-based collaboration in social sectors** such as poverty alleviation, development, etc. SDF is **governed by a Board** consisting of representatives from the **Ministry of Finance** of the Member States. The Governing Council of SDF (Finance Ministers of MSs) oversees the functioning of the Board.
- **South Asian University:** South Asian University (SAU) is an international university, located in **New Delhi India**. Degrees and Certificates awarded by the SAU are at par with the respective Degrees and Certificates awarded by the National Universities/ Institutions.
- **South Asian Regional Standards Organization:** South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO) has its **Secretariat at Dhaka**, Bangladesh. It was established to **achieve and enhance coordination and cooperation among SAARC member states in the fields of standardization and conformity assessment** and is aimed to develop harmonized Standards for the region to facilitate intra-regional trade and to have access in the global market.

- **SAARC Arbitration Council:** It is an **inter-governmental body** having its **office in Pakistan** is mandated to provide a legal framework/forum within the region for fair and efficient settlement of commercial, industrial, trade, banking, investment and such other disputes, as may be referred to it by the member states and their people.

SAARC Achievements

- **Free Trade Area (FTA):** SAARC is comparatively a new organization in the global arena. The **member countries have established a Free Trade Area (FTA)** which will increase their internal trade and lessen the trade gap of some states considerably.
- **SAPTA:** South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement for **promoting trade amongst the member** countries came into effect in 1995.
- **SAFTA:** A Free Trade Agreement confined to goods, but excluding all services like information technology. Agreement was signed to reduce customs duties of all traded goods to zero by the year 2016.
- **SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS):** SATIS is following the GATS-plus 'positive list' approach for trade in services liberalization.
- **SAARC University:** Establish a SAARC **university in India**, a food bank and also an energy reserve in Pakistan.

- SAARC Satellite or **GSAT – 9**: It would benefit SAARC – Pakistan countries in receiving communications, telemedicine, meteorological forecasting and broadcasting.

Significance for India

- **Neighborhood first**: Primacy to the country's immediate neighbors.
- **Geostrategic significance**: **Can counter China** (OBOR initiative) through engaging Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka in development process and economic cooperation.
- **Regional stability**: SAARC can help in **creation of mutual trust and peace** within the region.
- **Global leadership role**: It offers India a platform to showcase its leadership in the region by taking up extra responsibilities.
- **Game changer for India's Act East Policy**: by **linking South Asian economies with South East Asian** will bring further economic integration and prosperity to India mainly in the Services Sector.

Challenges

- **Low frequency of meetings**: More engagement is required by the member states and instead of meeting biennial meetings should be held annually.

- **Broad area of cooperation leads to diversion of energy** and resources.
- **Limitation in SAFTA:** The implementation of SAFTA has not been satisfactory a Free Trade Agreement confined to goods, excluding all services like information technology.
- **Indo-Pak Relations:** Escalated tension and conflict between India and Pakistan have severely hampered the prospects of SAARC.
- **SAARC satellite:** SAARC Satellite is a proposed **communication-cum-meteorology satellite by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** for the SAARC region
- **Framework agreement on cooperation in power sector**– During 18th SAARC summit, foreign ministers of all the eight countries signed the framework agreement on **cooperation in power sector** which will ensure electricity trading through grid connectivity.

News: Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)

- Recently, the central government has released Rs 206 crore to states for the promotion of exports under the Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) initiative.

Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)

- Government of India is implementing Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) from FY 2017-18 with the objective to assist Central and State Government Agencies for the creation of appropriate infrastructure for the growth of exports from the States.
- The scheme is being implemented by Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The Scheme provides financial assistance in the form of grant-in-aid to Central/State Government-owned agencies for setting up or for up-gradation of export infrastructure.
- The other objectives of the scheme include: to enhance export competitiveness, first mile and last mile connectivity for export-oriented projects and also addressing quality and certification measures including sanitary and phytosanitary/ Technical Barriers to Trade compliance.

- The scheme can be availed by the **States through their Implementing Agencies**, for infrastructure projects with overwhelming export linkages like the Border Haats, Land customs stations, quality testing and certification labs, cold chains, trade promotion centres, dry ports, export warehousing and packaging, SEZs and ports/airports cargo terminuses.
- This is a new scheme and not complementary but it replaces the previous Assistance to States for creating Infrastructure for the Development and growth of Exports (ASIDE) Scheme.

News: Family Courts Amendment Bill, 2022

- Recently, the **Lok Sabha passed the Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2022 that seeks to amend the Family Courts Act, 1984** to establish family courts in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

Family Courts Amendment Bill, 2022

- Family Courts Amendment Bill, 2022 **seeks to provide for the establishment of Family Courts in the State of Himachal Pradesh with effect from the 15th February, 2019 and in the State of Nagaland with effect from the 12th September, 2008.**

- It also seeks to insert a new Section 3A to retrospectively validate all actions under the said Act taken by the State Government of Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland and the Family Courts of those states prior to the commencement of the Family Courts (Amendment) Act, 2022.
- According to the bill, all orders of appointment of a family court judge, and the posting, promotion or transfer of such a judge under the Act will also be valid in the two States.

Need for the Amendment

- Out of the 715 Family courts in India, three Family Courts were in the State of Himachal Pradesh and two-Family Courts were in the State of Nagaland.
- However, for Himachal and Nagaland, the Central Government notification was not issued for bringing the said Act into force in these states.
- The issue of lack of jurisdiction of Family Courts in the State of Himachal Pradesh has been challenged before the High Court of Himachal Pradesh.
- It was stated that as the Central Government has not issued any notification to extend the jurisdiction of Family Courts in the State of Himachal Pradesh, such Courts are functioning without jurisdiction and anything done or any action taken under the said Act appears to be void ab initio (Having no legal effect from inception).

- The family courts in Nagaland too were operating without any legal authority since 2008.
- The bill is to remove such irregularities.

Family Courts Act, 1984

- The Family Courts Act, 1984 provides for establishment of Family Courts by the State Governments in consultation with the High Court with a view to promote conciliation and secure speedy settlement of disputes relating to marriage and family affairs.
- The state government may, with the concurrence of the High Court, appoint one or more persons to be the Judge or Judges of a Family Court.
- It is mandatory for the State Government to set up a Family Court for every area in the State comprising a city or a town whose population exceeds one million.
- Presently, there are 715 Family Courts which are established and functioning in 26 States and Union territories.

Features of the Act

- The Family Courts are **free to evolve their own rules of procedure**, which override the rules of procedure contemplated under the Code of Civil Procedure.
- Special emphasis is put on settling the disputes by mediation and conciliation, when the matter is solved by an agreement between both the parties; it reduces the chances of any further conflict.
- The **cases are kept away from the trappings of a formal legal system**, which can be a very traumatic experience for the families and lead to personal and financial losses that can have a devastating effect on human relations as well.
- A Family court has **jurisdiction in both civil and criminal matters** under the act.
- Under civil matters, it can deal with any suit and proceeding related to matrimonial issues, spousal property, and the legitimacy of any person, maintenance, guardianship of the person or custody of or access to any minor.
- Under criminal matters, it has jurisdiction over orders related to maintenance of wife, children and parents described under Chapter IX of Criminal Procedure Code (Cr. P. C.).
- The act provides that parties to a dispute before a Family court **shall not be entitled right to be represented by a legal practitioners**. However, the court in

the interest of justice seeks the assistance of a legal practitioner as amicus curiae.

- **Family Court is free to consider any evidence** if it assists effectively in dealing with a dispute despite its admissibility under the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
- The proceedings before the Family Court are first referred to conciliation and only when the conciliation proceedings fail to resolve the issue successfully, the matter taken up for trial by the Court. The act provides for the social welfare agencies, counselors during the conciliation stage and to secure the service of medical and welfare experts.
- An **appeal** against the judgment or order passed by the Family Court can be filed in **High Court** preferably within **30 Days**.