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1. Africa adopt PEN-PLUS strategy against non-communicable diseases (Aug. 27, 2022)

Recently Africa has adopted a new strategy called the Pen-Plus strategy to promote access to diagnosis, treatment and care of serious non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Pen-plus strategy :

- It is a regional strategy to address serious non-communicable diseases in first-level referral health facilities.
- The strategy aims to bridge the gap in access to care for patients with chronic and severe NCDs.
- It urges countries to establish standardised programs to combat chronic and serious non-communicable diseases to ensure that essential medicines, technologies and diagnostics are available and accessible in district hospitals.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Non-Communicable Diseases :

- Non-communicable diseases are medical conditions or diseases that are not spread by infectious agents.
- Non-communicable diseases are also known as chronic diseases because they are long-lasting and result from a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioural factors.
- NCDs include heart disease, cancer, diabetes, asthma etc.
- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), these cause 71% of deaths globally.
- The proportion of mortality due to NCDs in the African region ranges between 27-88%.

Status of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in India :

- About 58 million people in India die from NCDs every year (WHO report, 2015) or in other words 1 in 4 Indians are at risk of dying from NCDs before they reach the age of 70.
- Further it has been found that the duration of 'Disability-adjusted Life Years' (DALYs) due to NCDs has increased by 30% in the year 1990 to 55% in the year 2016 and the proportion of deaths due to it has also increased .
- NCDs (for all types of deaths) increased from 37% in 1990 to 61% in 2016.

2. For the first time, India votes against Russia in UNSC during procedural vote on Ukraine (Aug. 27, 2022)

India for the first time on August 24 voted against Russia during a “procedural vote” at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Ukraine.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The UNSC held a meeting to take stock of the six-month-old Russia-Ukraine conflict on the 31st anniversary of Ukraine's independence.
- A procedural vote was requested regarding the participation of the Ukrainian President in the meeting held by video tele-conference.
- The **15-member UNSC** invited Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to address a meeting through a video tele-conference.
- This is the first time India has voted against Russia on the Ukraine-Russia issue since Russian military action began in February.
- So far, India has not participated in the UN Security Council on Ukraine due to the displeasure of the Western powers led by the United States.
- Western countries, including the US, have imposed major economic and other sanctions on Russia after the attack on Ukraine.
- India has so far not criticised Russia for its aggression against Ukraine.
- India has repeatedly called on Russia and Ukraine to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue.
- India has also expressed its support for all diplomatic efforts to end the conflict between the two countries.

About UNSC :

- It was established in 1945 by the United Nations Charter.
- It is one of the six major organs of the United Nations.
- The other 5 organs of the United Nations are - the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat.
- It has five permanent members - **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States**, collectively known as the P5.
- India is currently a non-permanent member of the UNSC for a two-year term, which expires in December.
- Any one of them can veto a resolution.
- Headquarters - **New York**

3. Argentina shows interest in Made in India 'Tejas' fighter aircraft (Aug. 27, 2022)

Argentina has shown interest to buy Tejas fighter aircraft manufactured in India under Make in India.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar acknowledged Argentina's interest in Tejas fighter aircraft and highlighted the importance of the proposal to enhance strategic cooperation of bilateral ties.
- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Argentina Minister of Foreign Affairs Santiago Cafiero jointly presided over a Joint Commission Meeting in Buenos Aires.
- During the meeting, both sides underlined the importance of bilateral relations in defence, nuclear energy, space, pharma, science and technology, yoga, climate change and economic cooperation.
- **Australia, Egypt, the United States, Indonesia and the Philippines** are also interested in Tejas jets.

TEJAS fighter aircraft :

- It is an 'Indigenous Light **Combat Aircraft**'.
- It has been jointly developed by '**Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)**' and '**Hindustan Aeronautics Limited**' (HAL).
- It is the smallest-lightweight single-engine 'Multirole Tactical Fighter Aircraft'.
- It has been designed with an aim to reduce India's dependence on Russia's MiG-21 fighter jets and move towards self-reliance in the field of national security.
- It is designed to carry a range of **air-to-air, air-to-surface weapons**.
- It is capable of refueling in the sky during the journey and has a maximum payload capacity of 4000 kg.
- It can achieve a maximum speed of Mach 1.8 and has a range of 3,000 km.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***Types of tejas :***

1. Tejas Trainer
2. LCA Navy
3. LCA Tejas Navy MK2
4. LCA Tejas Mk-1A

Argentina :

- President - **Alberto Fernández**
- Capital - **Buenos Aires**
- Currency - **Argentine peso**
- Official Language - **Spanish**
- location - **South America continent**

4. Thailand constitutional court suspends PM Prayuth Chan-ocha (Aug. 25, 2022)

The constitution court of Thailand on 25 August temporarily suspended prime minister Prayuth Chan-ocha over allegations that he has continued in the post after the expiry of his term.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The court ruled that the PM would remain suspended until the allegations were investigated.
- According to the Constitution of Thailand, the prime minister cannot hold office for more than eight years.
- Prayuth Chan-ocha became prime minister after a coup in 2014, and eight years have passed since then.
- As military leader, Prayuth seized power after a coup in May 2014 and, in August 2014, appointed himself prime minister of the new military government.
- Hence the opposition argues that his term as prime minister began in August 2014 and ended this week.
- The court considered the petition and supporting documents and gave this decision on the basis of factual doubts.
- The court, with a majority of four out of five judges, with effect from 24 August 2022, said that Prayuth be suspended as prime minister until the court issues a final decision.
- Deputy Prime Minister Pravit Wongsuwan will currently be the interim head of government.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About Thailand :

- Capital - Bangkok
- Official Language - Thai

5. Bangladesh-born Fahmida Azim wins 2022 Pulitzer prize (Aug. 25, 2022)

Bangladesh-born illustrator and story writer Fahmida Azeem, who works for America's online magazine 'Insider', has been selected for the Pulitzer Prize for the year 2022.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- He will be given this award for the category of Illustrated, Interpretive Reporting and Commentary.
- Fahmida Azeem has been selected to work on the persecution of Uighurs in China.
- Four journalists of Insider magazine including Fahmida Azeem have been selected for the award –
 - fahmida azeem
 - Anthony Dale Colonel
 - Josh Adams
 - Walt Hickey
- Fahmida Azeem was born in Bangladesh and later settled in America.
- His work has focused on themes of identity, culture and autonomy.
- His works are published in many international magazines like Glamour, Scientific American, The Intercept, Vice, The New York Times.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***About Pulitzer Prize :***

- The award was established in the year 1917 by provisions written in the will of Joseph Pulitzer.
- Columbia University administers the award.
- The Pulitzer Prize is considered America's most prestigious honour in the field of journalism.
- The award is given in a total of 22 categories. In which 15 categories of journalism and 7 categories of book, drama, music etc. are included.
- In 21 categories, each winner receives USD 15,000 and a certificate. A gold medal is awarded to the winner in the Public Service category of the award.
- Govind Bihari Lal was the first Indian to receive the Pulitzer Prize in 1937.

6. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky to be awarded the 'Liberty Medal' award for the year 2022 (Aug. 25, 2022)

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has been nominated for the 'Liberty Medal' for the year 2022 by the 'National Constitution Centre'.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- He has been chosen for this honour for his heroic defence of freedom in the face of Russian tyranny.
- He will be honoured in October 2022 at the National Constitution Centre (NCC), Philadelphia, USA.

Other awards given to Volodymyr Zelensky :

- **Ronald Reagan Freedom Award 2022** - It is given to those who have made a great contribution to the cause of freedom.
- **John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award 2022**

About Liberty Medal Award :

- The '**Liberty Medal**' award is an annual award given by the NCC of the United States of America.
- It was founded by the Philadelphia Foundation.
- The major winners of this award are Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan, Malala Yousafzai and Colin Powell.
- This award is given to a person of courage and conviction who has fought to protect the cause of freedom of the people.

7. 8th India-Brazil Joint Commission Meeting (Aug. 25, 2022)

External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar who is on his first ever visit to South America, co-chaired the 8th India-Brazil Joint Commission Meeting on 24 August with his Brazilian counterpart, Carlos Franca.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The two leaders held wide-ranging discussions on trade, investment and other consular domains.
- The two ministers signed agreements in the field of **broadcasting and taxation, exchanging views on BRICS, IBSA, UN, G20 and Ukraine conflict.**

- The Joint Commission meeting saw wide-ranging discussions on trade and investment, petroleum, biofuels, edible oils and minerals, health, pharma, traditional medicine, science and technology, agriculture and livestock, space, defence, terrorism and consular.
- The Brazilian Government released a **commemorative stamp** on the occasion of India's 75th Independence day.
- On 22 August, Jaishankar concluded his first ever official visit to Paraguay where he inaugurated the **newly-opened Indian Embassy** in the capital city Asuncion.
- He also unveiled a **bust of Mahatma Gandhi** in Paraguay on 21 August and appreciated the Asuncion Municipality's decision to locate it at the prominent waterfront of the city.
- He also visited the historic Casa de la **Independencia**, from where Paraguay's independence movement began more than two centuries ago.

India-Brazil Relations :

- Diplomatic relations were established between India and Brazil in 1948, both countries opened embassies in the same year.
- India's strategic partnership with Brazil continues to intensify with several high-level partnerships.
- President Bolsonaro was the chief guest at India's Republic Day parade in 2020.
- As strategic partners, India and Brazil have several institutional mechanisms to coordinate various aspects of their bilateral relations.
- This includes Joint Commission Meeting, Strategic Dialogue, Foreign Office Consultations, Trade Monitoring Mechanism, Economic and Financial Dialogue, Dialogue on Consular and Mobility Issues, Joint Defence Commission, Joint Committee on Science & Technology and India-Brazil Business Leaders Forum.
- In Brazil, the Brazil-India Parliamentary Friendship Group has been established.
- President - **Jair Bolsonaro**
- Capital - **Brasília**
- Official Language - **Portuguese**
- Currency - **Brazilian real**

8. Sri Lanka ranks 5th among the 10 countries with highest food price inflation - World Bank (Aug. 24, 2022)

Sri Lanka ranks 5th among the 10 countries with the highest food price inflation, according to the latest World Bank assessment.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- According to the World Bank assessment, **Lebanon, Zimbabwe, Venezuela and Turkey** ranked first four countries, while **Iran, Argentina, Suriname, Ethiopia and Moldova** ranked behind Sri Lanka.
- The World Bank said record high food prices have triggered a global crisis that drives millions of people to extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition.
- The Ukraine war, supply chain disruptions, and the COVID-19 pandemic have pushed food prices to an all-time high.
- Rising food prices have a greater impact on people in low- and middle-income countries.
- These countries spend a larger share of their income on food than people in high-income countries.

Domestic food price inflation at high worldwide :

- According to the data, almost all low and middle income countries have high inflation between April and July 2022.
- The World Bank says countries should lift trade restrictions or export bans on fertilizers.
- The use of fertilizers should be made more efficient by giving proper incentives to the farmers.
- Investing in innovation to develop best practices and new technologies can help increase production per kilogram of fertilizer.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***Top 10 Countries hit hardest by Food Inflation :***

1. Lebanon
2. Zimbabwe
3. Venezuela
4. Turkiye
5. Sri Lanka
6. Iran
7. Argentina
8. Suriname
9. Ethiopia
10. Moldova

9. Defence Minister to attend SCO Defence Ministers' meeting at Tashkent, Uzbekistan (Aug. 24, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will attend the SCO Defence Ministers' meeting at Tashkent in Uzbekistan on 24 August.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- He will attend the Annual Meeting of the Defence Ministers' of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States.
- Chinese Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe and Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu are also expected to attend the SCO meeting.
- Other defence ministers of member countries of the grouping will also attend the meet.
- The SCO Defence Ministerial meeting is taking place about three weeks before the annual summit of this grouping.
- **The annual summit** will be held in **Samarkand on September 15-16.**
- During his visit to Tashkent, the Defence Minister will call on the Defence Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Lieutenant General Bakhodir Kurbanov.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***What is Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) ?***

- It is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation.
- It was founded in 2001.
- The SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and came into force in 2003.
- It is a Eurasian political, economic and military organisation.
- Its aim is to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- China, Russia and four Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – were founding members of the SCO.
- Official Languages - Russian and Chinese
- Chairmanship - On the basis of rotation for a year by Member States

10. World Water Week - 2022 (Aug. 23, 2022)

World Water Week - 2022 is being held in Stockholm, Sweden from 23 August to 1 September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Theme of World Water Week 2022 - **“Seeing the unseen: The value of water”**.
- The event has been organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).
- The theme of World Water Week 2022 is covered under three main approaches -
 1. The value of water for people and sustainable development
 2. the value of water for nature and climate change
 3. the financial and economic value of water
- The event will provide many opportunities for people around the world to unite, promote ideas, innovate and discuss the future.
- Around 300 sessions will be organised under World Water Week on water related topics including food security, health, agriculture, technology, biodiversity, climate change etc.
- World Water Week will attract top scientists, UN experts, local community groups, entrepreneurs, top politicians, students, CEOs and many more.
- This will help in achieving reforms towards the Sustainable Development Goals.