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Health sector issues

Why in news?

- Recently the U.S.- based Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy (CDDEP) highlighted the issues faced by the India Health Sector.

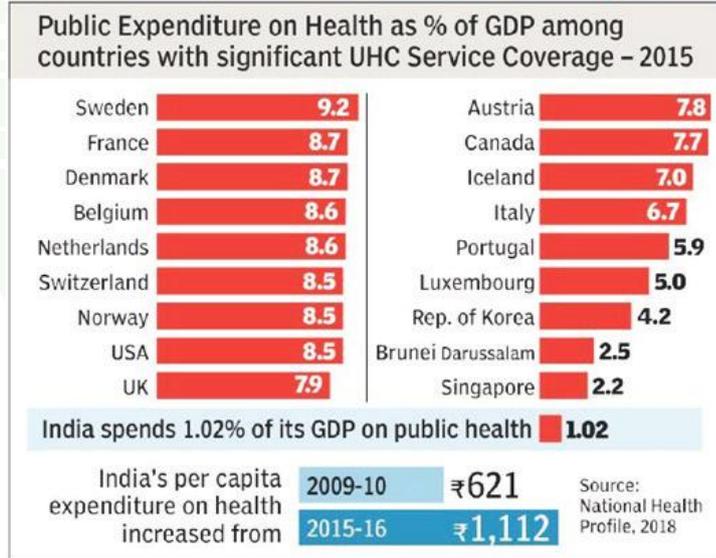
Key takeaways from the report:

- In India, there is one government doctor for every 10,189 people (the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends a ration of 1:1,000), or there is a deficit of 6,00,000 doctors, and the nurse: patient ratio is 1:483, implying a shortage of two million nurses.
- High out-of-pocket medical costs to the patient are compounded by limited government spending for health services.
- In India, 65% of health expenditure is out-of-pocket, and such expenditures push some 57 million people into poverty each year.
- The study also noted that lack of access to antibiotics kills more people than antibiotic resistance.
- Worldwide, the irrational use of antibiotics and poor antimicrobial stewardship lead to treatment failure.

About National Health Profile:

- National Health Profile (NHP) is an annual publication of the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The first release of the annual publication was in 2005.
- It covers all the major information on Demography, Socio-Economic Status, Disease Morbidity & Mortality, Healthcare Finance, Human Resources in Health and Healthcare Infrastructure.
- NHP is an initiative which is at par with international standards of data publication

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Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has decided to keep Pakistan on its grey list at the end of its week-long plenary meeting in Paris. India had lobbied hard to get the global financial body to blacklist Pakistan for non-compliance in curbing terror financing.

- Pakistani analysts say being put on the FATF watchlist could deal a blow to Pakistan's economy, making it harder for foreign investors and companies to do business in the country.
- It would be counterproductive to put Pakistan on the watch list as it would hurt its capability to fight terrorism. Also, being put back on the grey list would heighten Pakistan's risk profile and some financial institutions would be wary of transacting with Pakistani banks and counterparties.
- Being placed on the FATF watchlist carries no direct legal implications but brings extra scrutiny from regulators and financial institutions that can chill trade and investment and increase transaction costs.

Note



About FATF :

The Financial Action Task Force is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 to develop mechanism to combat money laundering. In the wake of the Pulwama terror attack, the FATF Condemned and issued a stern statement to Pakistan, asking it to comply with an action plan on terror financing or face further action.

Objectives of the FATF

- To set standard and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing.
- Others threats which may jeopardize the integrity of the international financial system.

Blacklist and grey list :

- FATF maintains two different lists of countries: those that have deficiencies in their AML/CTF regimes, but they commit to an action plan to address these loopholes, and those that do not end up doing enough. The former is commonly known as grey list and latter as blacklist
- As of now there are only two countries in the blacklist — Iran and North Korea — and seven on the grey list, including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria and Yemen.

Canada removes Khalistani extremism from terror report**In News:**

Canada removes Khalistani extremism from terror report

In Brief:

Punjab CM terms it threat to Indian and global security.

1. Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Sunday said that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau administration's decision to remove all references to Khalistani extremism in its 2018 report on terrorist threats was a threat to Indian and global security.
2. It was claimed to be clearly aimed at protecting its political interests in an election year, which could have serious consequences for Indo-Canadian relations in the long run.
3. The erasure of the various references to Khalistan and Khalistani organisations from the latest threat report as an unpardonable act in the eyes of the peace-loving global community, according to the CM of Punjab.
5. Sikh radical group Dal Khalsa has meanwhile welcomed the removal of the reference to "Khalistani Extremism" from the Canada Public Safety Report 2018.

About the Khalistan Movement:

1. A Sikh separatist movement that wants to create a separate country(The Land of the Pure).
2. To serve as a homeland of Sikhs.
3. The Proposed territory wants to combine the states of both the Punjab(India and Pakistan), includes Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan.

Note

Uighur community

- The Uighurs are Turkic people who live in Central and East Asia.
- They primarily live in Xinjiang Province of China.
- Uighurs are one of China's fifty-five officially recognized ethnic minorities.
- They primarily practice Islam.
- Uyghurs in Xinjiang suffer under a "fully-fledged police state" with extensive controls and restrictions upon their religious, cultural and social life.
- It is reported that more than 1 lakh Uighurs are detained in mass detention camps by the Chinese government, aimed at changing the political thinking of detainees, their identities, and their religious beliefs.



Oil-eating bacteria found in world's deepest ocean trench

In news:

In an expedition, organised by marine explorer and film director James Cameron, Scientists have discovered a unique oil eating bacteria in the Mariana Trench, the deepest part of the Earth - 11,000 metres.

The hydrocarbons may help microbes survive the crushing pressure at the bottom of the Mariana Trench, which is equal to 1,091 kilogrammes pressed against a fingernail.

Bioremediation:

It is a process that uses mainly microorganisms, plants, or microbial or plant enzymes to detoxify contaminants at contaminated sites, such as water, soil, sludge, and waste streams. The concept includes biodegradation, which refers to the partial, and sometimes total, transformation or detoxification of contaminants by microorganisms and plants.

The process of bioremediation enhances the rate of the natural microbial degradation of contaminants by supplementing the indigenous microorganisms (bacteria or fungi) with nutrients

Major incidents where Bioremediation was employed:

- It was used in the Alaska oil spill from the Exxon Valdez in 1989.
- The Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which added roughly 800 million litres of hydrocarbons to the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

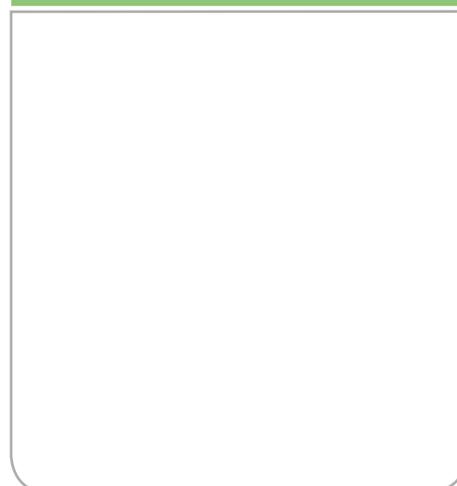
MSC Chitra oil spill:

Two cargo ships had collided off Mumbai coast, resulting in oil spill. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), carried out the bioremediation process by using the 'oilzapper' technology.

The Oilzapper, the bacteria



Note



that feeds on hydrocarbon compounds present in crude oil and oily sludge (a hazardous hydrocarbon waste generated by oil refineries) and converts them into harmless CO₂ and water.

The Oilzapper is neatly packed into sterile polythene bags and sealed aseptically for safe transport. The shelf life of the product is three months at ambient temperature.

Over 5 kg of microbes can clean 1 tonne of oil-contaminated sand or soil. This method is cost-effective and safe.

More than 5000 hectares of cropland contaminated with crude oil spills has already been reclaimed in different parts of India and more than 26,000 tonnes of oily sludge successfully treated with Oilzapper. Many oil-slick contaminated lakes in the north-eastern parts of India have also been cleaned up in last two years.

Not a Panacea:

Various nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus are needed for active bacterial action. This is why bioremediation process is difficult in the open ocean.

Scientists caution that bioremediation is only a partial solution. It's best used on sandy beaches and in salt marshes after the thickest oil has been removed by bulldozer and shovel.

The cleaning up of the rocky areas on the beaches and mangroves is difficult using Oilzapper. The oil must be mopped out from the rocks with the help of cotton waste, which can then be treated with the help of bioremediation. Rocky beaches will take a very long time to recover,

Yangtze giant softshell turtle

In news:

The last known female Yangtze giant softshell turtle has died in Suzhou Zoo in China. It is believed to be more than 90 years old.

IUCN status:

Critically Endangered

In brief:

It died after local staff, together with international experts, attempted to artificially inseminate her.



Note



The research team comprised of domestic and international experts would conduct an autopsy to determine the cause of death.

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) calls the Yangtze giant softshell turtle the world's most critically endangered turtle species, killed off due to hunting as well as habitat destruction.

Now, there are only three left in the world. The Suzhou Zoo houses a male Yangtze giant softshell turtle. The other two live in Vietnam, but their genders are unknown. Both live in the wild.

Yangtze giant softshell turtles originated in China, making their homes in the Yangtze River and Taihu Lake

C-295 aircraft

Why in news?

- The purchase deal of C-295 aircraft for Indian Air Force reached its final stages.
- It is learnt that the Defence Acquisition Council will soon give its approval for its purchase immediately after the Lok Sabha elections.

About C-295 aircraft:

It is a twin-turboprop tactical military transport aircraft, and is currently manufactured by Airbus Defence and Space in Spain.

About Defence Acquisition Council:

- The Defence Acquisition Council was formed in 2006.
- It is neither a Constitutional nor a Statutory body.
- It was formed by the Executive resolution.
- It is headed by Union Minister of Defence and was constituted to ensure a fair defence procurement planning process.
- The Council aims to ensure expeditious procurement of the requirements of the Armed Forces in terms of capabilities sought and time frame prescribed by optimally utilizing the allocated budgetary resources.
- The functions of the DAC include
 1. In principle approval of 15 Years Long Terms Integrated Perspective Plan for Defence Forces
 2. Accord of Acceptance of Necessity to acquisition proposals
 3. Categorization of the acquisition proposals relating to 'Buy', 'Buy & Make' and 'Make'
 4. Issues relating to Single vendor clearance
 5. Decision regarding 'offset' provisions in respect of acquisition proposals above Rs. 300 crores
 6. Decisions regarding Transfer of Technology under 'Buy & Make' category of acquisition proposals and
 7. Field Trial evaluation.



Note



- The composition of the DAC is as follows:
 1. Defence Minister: Chairman
 2. Minister of State for Defence: Member
 3. Chief of Army Staff: Member
 4. Chief of Naval Staff: Member
 5. Chief of Air Staff: Member
 6. Defence Secretary: Member
 7. Secretary Defence Research & Development: Member
 8. Secretary Defence Production: Member
 9. Chief of Integrated Staff Committees HQ IDS: Member
 10. Director General (Acquisition): Member
 11. Dy. Chief of Integrated Defence: Staff Member Secretary

'World's largest plane' lifts off

In news:

Built by Stratolaunch, the company set up by the late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen in 2011. Its 385 ft (117 m) wingspan is the length of an American football field.

In brief:

The plane is designed to drop rockets and other space vehicles weighing up to 500,000 pounds at an altitude of 35,000 feet and has been billed by the company as making satellite deployment as “easy as booking an airline flight.”

The twin-fuselage six-engine jet flew up to 4,572m and reached speeds of about 274 km/h on its maiden flight over the Mojave Desert in California.

Stratolaunch describes its vessel as the “world’s largest plane” but there are aircraft which are longer from nose to tail.



Note

