Why in News?

World Health Assembly’s 75th session is being held at World Health Organization (WHO) Headquarters (HQ), Geneva from 22nd to 28th May, 2022.

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare emphasized upon India’s commitment towards building a more resilient global health security architecture.
- Health for peace, peace for health is the theme of the World Health Assembly, 2022.
- India’s six Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers were awarded the Global Health Leaders Award at the ongoing 75th World Health Assembly to recognize their "outstanding contributions to advancing global health, demonstrated leadership, and commitment to regional health issues."

What is World Health Assembly?

- **About:**
  - World Health Assembly (WHA) is WHO’s decision-making body attended by delegations from all of WHO’s member states,
  - It is held yearly at the HQ of WHO, i.e., Geneva, Switzerland.
  - Specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board remains the focus of this assembly.
  - Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2022’s assembly is the first in-person assembly.

- **Functions of WHA:**
  - Deciding on Organization’s policies.
  - Appointment of the Director-General of WHO.
  - Administration of financial policies.
  - Review and approval of the proposed programme budget.

- **Key Features of the Union Minister’s address at the 75th Session:**
  - Streamlining of the WHO’s approval process for vaccines and therapeutics is needed to have a more resilient global health security architecture.
  - An equitable access to vaccines and medicines should be allowed including the intellectual property aspects.
  - Cost-effective research, technology transfer and regional manufacturing capacities must be on the priority list.
  - As per WHO, 4.7 million Covid deaths (10 times the official figure) have been reported in India. Therefore, concern over WHO’s recent exercise on all cause excess mortality on account of Covid-19 was expressed.
  - India urged WHO to consider the country-specific authentic data published through
the Civil Registration System (CRS) by the Registrar General of India (RGI).
- The use of mathematical models of data prediction shouldn't be relied upon. Consequently, the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (set up under Article 263 of the Constitution) passed a unanimous resolution condemning WHO’s approach in this regard.

What is Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)?

- **About:**
  - One of the key components of National Rural Health Mission (NHRM) is ASHA.
  - She is a social health activist in the age group of 25-45 years who serves as the first point of contact to cater any health-related requirements of deprived sections of the rural population including women and children, who pose a difficulty in accessing the health services.
  - Generally, there is “1 ASHA per 1000 population”. However, this norm can be relaxed in tribal, hilly and desert areas to “1 ASHA per habitation” depending upon the workload.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
  - Creating awareness about health determinants by providing information to the people about nutrition, basic sanitation & hygienic practices, healthy living and working conditions, etc.
    - She also provides information about existing health services and encourages people for the timely utilization of health & family welfare services.
  - Counselling of women on birth preparedness, safe delivery’s importance, breastfeeding, contraception, immunization, child care and prevention of Reproductive Tract Infection/Sexually Transmitted Infection (RTIs/STIs).
  - Facilitating the access of health services such as Ante Natal Check-up (ANC), Post Natal Check-up (PNC), immunization, sanitation and other services at the village/sub-center/primary health centers by mobilizing the community.
  - Developing a comprehensive health plan by working in collaboration with the Village Health & Sanitation Committee of the Gram Panchayat.
  - Providing primary medical care for minor disorders like fever, diarrhoea and minor injuries. Under Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme.
  - Arranging the escort for pregnant women and children who need treatment or are required to be admitted in the nearest health-care facility.
  - Keeping the Sub-Centres/Primary Health Centre informed about births and deaths in her village and any disease outbreaks/ unusual health concerns in the community.

*Source: TH*

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