UN Specialised Agencies: IMF, World Bank and UNESCO (Part -5)

UN SPECIALISED AGENCIES

UNSAs are 15 autonomous international organizations working with the UN

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

- Estd. - 1944 (UN Bretton Woods Conference following Great Depression 1930s)
- Headquarters - Washington, DC, USA
- Functions -
  - » Global financial assistance
  - » Facilitate international trade
  - » Financing for developing countries
  - » Promotion of exchange rate stability
- Member States - 190 (India a founding member)

India's FM is the ex-officio Governor on the Board of Governors of IMF

- Special Drawing Rights (SDR) -
  - » IMF's intl. reserve asset to supplement the official reserves of its member countries (not a currency)

Currencies in SDR Basket - $, €, £, ¥ (Yen) and CN¥ (Renminbi)

- IMF Quotas -
  - » Reflects a member country's relative position in world economy (India – 2.75%)
  - » Denominated in SDRs
- Flagship Publications -
  - » World Economic Outlook
  - » Global Financial Stability Report
  - » Fiscal Monitor
  - » External Sector Report

World Bank Group (WBG)

- Estd. - Same as IMF
- Headquarters - Washington, DC, USA

5 Institutions of WBG (estd.)

- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) aka World Bank (1944)
- International Finance Corporation (IFC) (1956)
- International Development Association (IDA) (1960)
- International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) (1966)
- Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA) (1988)

Membership of IMF is a prerequisite for membership of IBRD

- Twin Goals of WBG -
  - » Ending extreme poverty by 2030
  - » Boosting shared prosperity of the poorest 40% of the population in all countries

Functions

- Provide loans, credits, and grants
- Investment, advice, asset management to companies/govts.
- Low/No-interest loans to Low-income countries
- Settle investment-disputes
- Insure lenders/investors against political risks

- Member States - 189 (India a founding member of IBRD, IFC & IDA)
  - » Ending extreme poverty by 2030

India is not a member of ICSID; claims it biased towards developed countries

- Major Publications -
  - » Human Capital Index
  - » World Development Report

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- Estd. - 1945 [proposed by CAME (Conference of Allied Ministers of Education)]
- Headquarters - Paris, France
- Areas of Specialisation -
  - » Educational development (pre-school to higher education)
  - » Protecting heritage, fostering creativity
  - » Science for a sustainable future
- Global Priorities of UNESCO -
  - » Africa
  - » Gender Equality
- Member States - 193 (incl. India) + 11 Associate

USA is not a UNESCO member

- Important Initiatives -
  - » World Heritage Convention and WHS List (India has 40 WHS)
  - » Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme
  - » International Geoscience and Global Geoparks Programme (IGGP)
  - » Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

India has served twice as a member of ICH Committee

- Important Reports -
  - » UNESCO Science Report
  - » Global Education Monitoring Report
  - » UNESCO State of the Education Report for India: Children with Disabilities

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Right to Health

For Prelims: Right to Health, WHO, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), United Nations, Fundamental Rights, DPSP, Supreme Court.

For Mains: Right to Health, Challenges and Way Forward.

Why in News?

Recently, the Rajasthan Government has passed the **Right to Health Bill**, which gives every resident of the state the right to avail free services at **all public health facilities.**

What are the Key Features of the Bill?

- Free healthcare services, including **consultation, drugs, diagnostics, emergency transport, procedure** and emergency care, will be provided at all public health institutions and select private facilities subject to conditions specified in the rules.
- The Bill makes it mandatory for the hospitals to provide treatment in emergency cases without waiting for medico-legal formalities and give medicines and transport facilities without charging money.
- The implementation of the law is expected to do away with out-of-pocket expenditure and bring **transparency and accountability within the health care system.**

What is the Right to Health?

- **About:**
    - Right to health refers to and means the **most attainable levels of health that every human being is entitled to.**
        - The origin of the right to health dates as far back as 1946 when the first international organization, **World Health Organisation (WHO)** came into existence to formulate health terms as human rights.
    - The right to health is **an essential component of human dignity,** and it is the responsibility of governments to ensure that this right is protected and promoted for all **individuals, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status.**
    - **Part IV of the Constitution under the** Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) ensures social and economic justice to its citizens. Therefore, Part IV of the Constitution directly or indirectly **relates to public policy in terms of health.**
- **Related Provisions in India:**

- **International Conventions:** India is a signatory of the **Article 25** of the [**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**](#) by the [**United Nations**](#) that grants the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being to humans including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.
- **Fundamental Rights:** [Article 21](#) of the Constitution of India guarantees a fundamental right to life & personal liberty. The right to health is inherent to a life with dignity.
- **DPSP:** Articles 38, 39, 42, 43, & 47 put the obligation on the state in order to ensure the effective realization of the **right to health.**
- **Judicial Pronouncements:** [**Supreme Court**](#) in Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity case (1996) held that in a welfare state, the primary duty of the government is to secure the welfare of the people and moreover it is the obligation of the government to provide adequate medical facilities for its people.
  - Also, in its landmark judgment in *Parmanand Katara Vs Union of India (1989),* Supreme Court had ruled that every doctor whether at a government hospital or otherwise has the professional obligation to extend his services with due expertise for protecting life.

- **Significance:**
  - **Right Based Healthcare Services:** The people are **entitled to the right to health**, and it creates a compulsion for the government to take steps toward this.
  - **Wide Access to Health Services:** Enables everyone to access the services and **ensures that the quality of those services is good enough to improve the health** of the people who receive them.
  - **Reduce Out of Pocket Expenditure:** Protects people from the financial consequences of paying for health services out of their own pockets and reduces the risk of people getting pushed into poverty.

What are the Challenges Related to Right to Health in India?

- **Inadequate Healthcare Infrastructure:**
  - Despite recent improvements, India's healthcare infrastructure remains inadequate, particularly in rural areas.
  - **India has 1.4 beds per 1,000 people**, 1 doctor per 1,445 people, and 1.7 nurses per 1,000 people. Over 75% of the healthcare infrastructure is concentrated in metro cities, where only **27% of the total population resides—the rest 73% of the Indian population lack even basic medical facilities.**
- **High Disease Burden:**
  - India has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including [**tuberculosis**](#), [**HIV/AIDS**](#), [**malaria**](#), and **diabetes.**
  - Addressing these diseases requires significant investment in healthcare infrastructure and resources.
    - According to a report by Frontiers in Public Health, more than 33% of the individuals **are still suffering from infectious diseases** out of the total ailing population in India.
    - The per capita out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure on infectious diseases is INR 7.28 and INR 29.38 in **inpatient and outpatient care,** respectively.
- **Gender Disparities:**
  - Women in India face significant health disparities, including limited access to healthcare, higher rates of maternal mortality, and gender-based violence.
    - According to the [**World Economic Forum 2021**](#), India consistently ranks among the five worst countries in the world for the health and survival of females.
    - Women from poor households account for over 2,25,000 lesser hospital visits than men between 2017 and 2019 for nephrology, cardiology, and oncology services alone,
- **Limited Health Financing:**
  - India's health financing system is limited, with low levels of public spending on healthcare. This limits the government's ability to invest in healthcare infrastructure and resources, and it can lead to inadequate healthcare services for individuals.
  - **Government of India spent 2.1% of GDP on healthcare in FY23.** This is much lower than the average health spending share of the GDP — at around 5.2% — of the Lower- and

Middle-Income Countries (LMIC).

Way Forward

- India needs to **significantly increase its investment in healthcare infrastructure** and resources, including medical facilities, equipment, and healthcare professionals. This can be achieved through increased public spending on healthcare and increased private sector investment.
- To improve access to healthcare, **India needs to address the barriers that prevent individuals from accessing healthcare services**, including financial constraints, transportation, and discrimination.
- This can be achieved through targeted policies and programs, such as health insurance schemes and mobile healthcare units.
- There is a need **to create a designated and autonomous agency to perform the functions of disease surveillance**, information gathering on the health impact of policies of key non-health departments, maintenance of national health statistics, enforcement of public health regulations, and dissemination of information to the public.

Source: IE

Illegal Sand Mining in National Chambal Sanctuary

For Prelims: National Chambal Sanctuary, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Important Bird and Biodiversity Area, Ramsar site, The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulations) Act, 1957, Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines 2016.

For Mains: Significance of National Chambal Sanctuary, Status of Sand Mining in India.
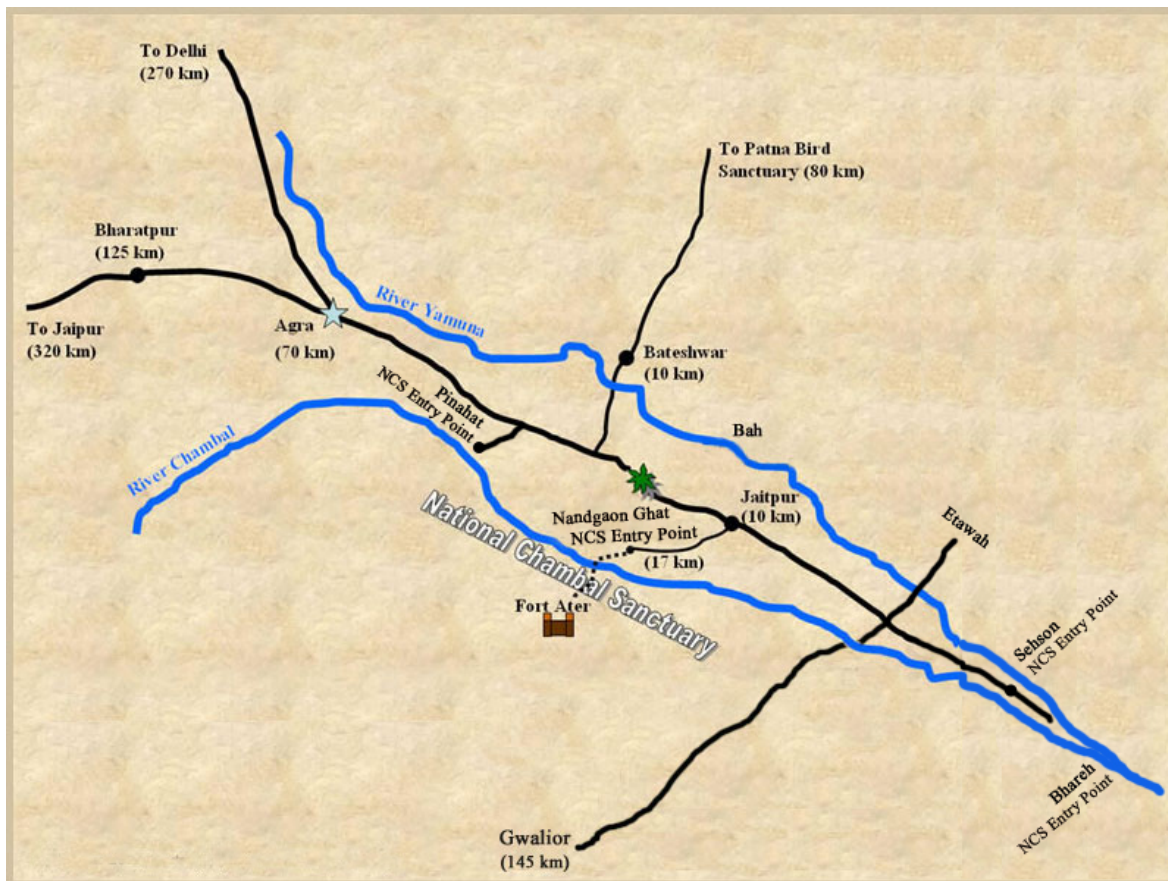
Why in News?

The area of **National Chambal Sanctuary** is under threat due to **illegal sand mining** activities that are **damaging the ecosystem and endangering its flora and fauna.**

- To tackle this issue, a high-level meeting was held in Jaipur, where the chief secretaries of the three states discussed **coordinated efforts to protect the sanctuary.**

What is the Significance of National Chambal Sanctuary?

- The **National Chambal Sanctuary**, located at the trijunction of **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.**
  - It is a fragile lotic ecosystem, which is a critically important breeding ground for gharials - **fish-eating crocodiles.**

- The sanctuary is protected under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, and is listed as an **'Important Bird and Biodiversity Area'.**
- The sanctuary is also a **proposed** Ramsar site**,** and over 320 species of resident and migratory birds inhabit the area.

What is the Status of Sand Mining in India?

- **About:**
    - Sand is classified as a **"minor mineral",** under **The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulations) Act, 1957** (MMDR Act) and administrative control over minor minerals vests with the **State Governments.**
        - **Rivers and coastal areas are the main sources of sand,** and the demand for it has increased significantly in recent years due to the construction and infrastructure development boom in the country.
    - The **Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has issued **"Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines 2016"** to promote scientific sand mining and environmentally friendly management practices.
- **Issues Related to Sand Mining in India:**
    - **Water Scarcity:** Sand mining can lead to the **depletion of groundwater** reserves and cause water scarcity in nearby areas.
        - For instance, **Yamuna River** in Yamuna Nagar district of Haryana is facing severe threat from mechanised and unsustainable stone and sand mining.
    - **Floods:** Excessive sand mining can cause the riverbeds to become **shallow, which can increase the risk of** floods**.**
        - For example, in the state of Bihar, **sand mining has led to increased flooding in the Kosi River,** causing damage to crops and property.
    - **Associated Illegal Activities:** Unregulated sand mining also involves illegal activities, such as **encroachment on public land, corruption, and evasion of taxes.**

What is the Legislative Framework of Mining Sector in India?

- The entry at serial **No. 23 of List II (State List) to the Constitution of India** mandates the **state government to own the minerals located within their boundaries.**
- The entry at serial **No. 54 of List I (Central List)** mandate the central government to own the minerals within the exclusive economic zone of India (EEZ).
  - In pursuance to this **Mines & Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act of 1957** was framed.
- **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** regulates mineral exploration and extraction. It is guided by the **UN treaty and India being a party to the treaty has received an exclusive right to explore polymetallic nodules** over 75000 sq. km in **Central Indian Ocean Basin.**

Conclusion

The joint action taken by the three states is a significant step towards conserving the **flora and fauna of the sanctuary,** protecting the environment and **preserving our natural heritage for future generations.**

Source: TH

India Aims to Become Top Global Aviation Market by 2030

For Prelims: CAPA India Aviation Summit, National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016, UDAN Scheme.

For Mains: Status of India's Aviation Sector, Recent Government Initiatives Related to Aviation Sector.

Why in News?

India is poised to become the **world's leading** aviation market, surpassing the **United States and China** by the end of the decade.

- The **Civil Aviation Secretary in India** made an announcement of the country's plans for expanding air connectivity to **increase accessibility for the population** during the **CAPA India Aviation Summit.**

What is the Status of India's Aviation Sector?

- **About:**
  - **India's Civil Aviation** is among the fastest-growing aviation markets globally and will be a major growth engine to make India a **USD 5 trillion economy by 2024.**
    - India is currently the world's **3rd-largest civil aviation market.**
  - Over the past 6 years, India's domestic passenger traffic has grown at a **compound annual growth rate (CAGR)** of around **14.5% and international passenger traffic at around 6.5%.**
  - India's domestic passenger traffic is projected to rise to **16 crores in the 2023-24** fiscal year and to **35 crores by 2029-30.**
- **Recent Government Initiatives Related to Aviation Sector:**
  - India's government aims to establish **6 major metropolitan cities** as international hubs for air travel.
  - **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016**
  - **UDAN Scheme**
- **Challenges:**
  - **High Operating Costs:** One of the major challenges for the Indian aviation sector is the **high operating costs**. This is due to a number of factors such as **high fuel prices, airport charges, and taxes.**
    - For airlines, the increase in jet fuel prices represents a major challenge as this cost typically accounts for **20% to 25% of total operational costs.**
  - **Infrastructure Constraints:** The Indian aviation sector also faces infrastructure constraints such as **limited airport capacity**, lack of modernized **air traffic control systems, and inadequate ground handling facilities.**
  - **Regulatory Framework:** The Indian aviation sector also faces challenges related to the **regulatory framework.**
    - The sector is heavily regulated, and airlines have to comply with a number of rules and regulations through different windows, which can be **complex and time-consuming.**

Conclusion

- **India's ambitious plans for growth** in the aviation sector present significant opportunities for the country's economy and its people. While there are challenges to overcome, India's **commitment to expanding its aviation infrastructure and developing its manufacturing** capabilities positions it well to become a major player in the global aviation market by the end of the decade.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Examine the development of Airports in India through joint ventures under Public–Private Partnership (PPP) model. What are the challenges faced by the authorities in this regard? **(2017)**

Source: IE

OneWeb India-2 Mission

Why in News?

In its second commercial launch, **ISRO's (Indian Space Research Organisation)** heaviest launch vehicle **LVM-3 (Launch Vehicle Mark 3)** will launch a fleet of **36 OneWeb satellites,** completing the first generation of the huge broadband constellation.

What is the LVM3-M3/OneWeb India-2 Mission?

- This will be the 18th launch of OneWeb and will add to the UK-based company's (OneWeb) existing constellation of 582 satellites.
- ISRO's commercial arm **NSIL had signed a contract with OneWeb to launch 72 satellites in two phases.** The first set of 36 satellites was launched in LVM3-M2/OneWeb India-1 mission on October 23, 2022.
- This is the second OneWeb fleet that India is launching. This **initiated India's journey into the commercial heavy lift-off space.**

What is OneWeb Constellation?

- **About:**
    - OneWeb Constellation operates in a **LEO Polar Orbit.**
    - **Satellites** are arranged in 12 rings (Orbital planes) with 49 satellites in each plane.
    - The orbital planes are **inclined to be near polar (87.9 Deg.)**
    - The orbital planes are 1200 km above the Earth. **Each satellite completes a full trip around the earth every 109 minutes.**
- **Significance:**
    - OneWeb already has connectivity solutions active today in key geographies across the globe and is bringing new areas online.
    - OneWeb's **high-speed, low-latency solutions will help connect communities,** enterprises, and governments around the world, demonstrating the **unparalleled potential of LEO connectivity.**

What are the Launch Vehicles Developed by ISRO?

- **Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV):** The first rocket developed by ISRO was simply called SLV, or Satellite Launch Vehicle.
    - It was followed by the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle or ASLV.
- **Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV):** SLV and ASLV both could carry small satellites, weighing up to 150 kg, to lower earth orbits.
    - ASLV operated till the early 1990s before PSLV came on the scene.
- **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV):** PSLV's first launch was in 1994, and it has been ISRO's main rocket ever since. Today's PSLV, however, is vastly improved and several times more

powerful than the ones used in the 1990s.
- It is the first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages.
- PSLV is the most reliable rocket used by ISRO to date, with 52 of its 54 flights being successful.
- It successfully launched two spacecraft – **Chandrayaan-1 in 2008 and** Mars Orbiter Spacecraft **in 2013** – that later travelled to Moon and Mars respectively.
- **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV):** GSLV is a much more powerful rocket, meant to carry heavier satellites much deeper into space. To date, GSLV rockets have carried out 18 missions, of which four ended in failure.
  - It can take 10,000 kg of satellites to lower the earth's orbits.
  - The indigenously developed Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS), forms the third stage of GSLV Mk II.
  - Mk-III versions have made ISRO entirely self-sufficient in launching its satellites.
    - Before this, it used to depend on the European Arianne launch vehicle to take its heavier satellites into space.
  - ISRO **has renamed the GSLV Mark-III as Launch Vehicle Mark-III.** A GSLV – for the Geostationary Orbit (GEO) – will continue to be called so.
    - The **LVM3 will go everywhere —GEO, Medium Earth orbit (MEO), LEO, and missions to the moon, sun.**

Source: IE

Interpol's Notices

Why in News?

Interpol, the global police body, has **removed the red notice** against **Mehul Choksi**, a fugitive wanted by India in the **USD 2 billion** Punjab National Bank **fraud case.**

- However, the Interpol red notice removal **doesn't affect India's investigations** or extradition request.

What is Interpol?

- The **International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol)** was set up in **1923**, as a secure **information-sharing platform** that facilitates **criminal investigation of police forces across the globe** through collection and dissemination of information received from various police forces.
    - It is headquartered in **Lyon, France.**
- Interpol has **195** member countries.
    - India became member since **15ᵗʰ October 1949.**
- It keeps **track of the movements of criminals and those under the police radar** in various regions and tips off police forces which had either sought the Interpol's assistance or which in its opinion will benefit from the particulars available with it.
    - It aims to promote the widest-possible **mutual assistance between criminal** police forces.
- **All contact of a country's law enforcement agency with Interpol** is through the highest investigating body of the land.
    - The **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) assumes this role in India** with one of its senior officers heading its exclusive **Interwing (the National Central Bureaus)** for collation of information and liaison with the world body.

What are Interpol Notices?

- **About:**
    - Its notices are **international requests for cooperation or alerts** allowing police in member countries to share **critical crime-related information.**
        - Notices are issued by the **General Secretariat at the request of a member country's** INTERPOL National Central Bureau and are made available for all our member countries to consult in our Notices database.
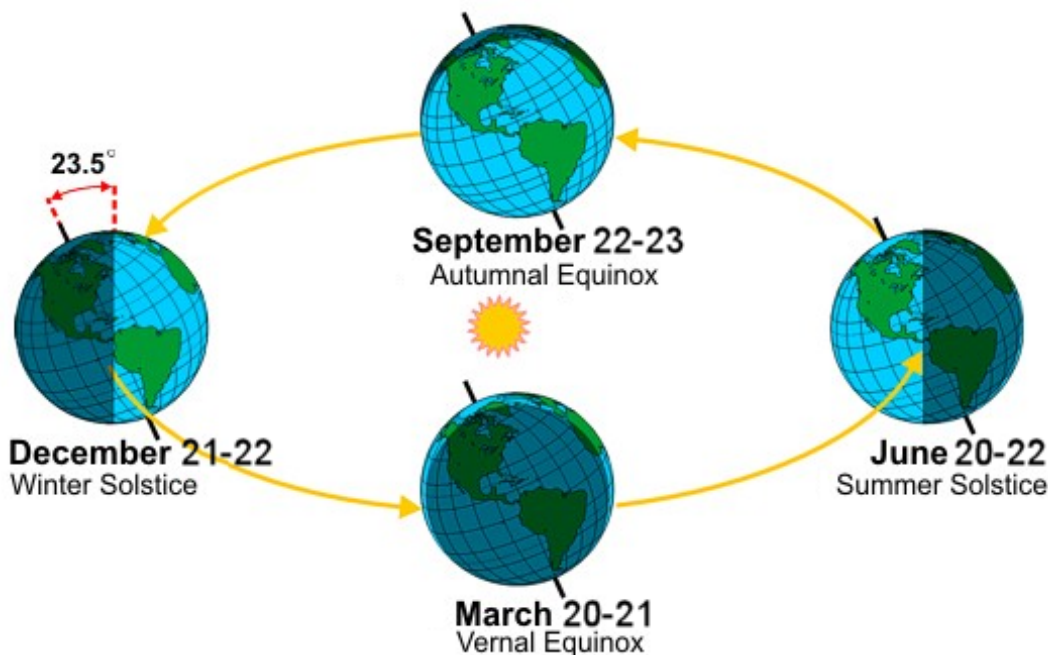- **Different Notices:**

Vernal Equinox

Why in News?

The vernal equinox is observed on March 21st 2023.

What is Equinox?

- **About:**
    - Equinox happens twice a year when the sun is directly above the equator, and it **occurs on approximately 21st March and 23rd September.**
    - During an equinox, both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres **have equal day and night time. The vernal equinox (spring equinox) takes place in the Northern Hemisphere around 20th or 21st March,** while in the Southern Hemisphere, it happens on 22nd or 23rd September.
    - Conversely, during the autumn season in the Northern Hemisphere on 23rd September (autumn equinox), it is springtime in the Southern Hemisphere, and on **21st March, it is the opposite.**

- **Significance:**
    - As a result, the Sun is located directly above the equator, and **both hemispheres receive an almost equal amount of sunlight.**
    - After the spring equinox, **the northern hemisphere tilts closer to the sun in March, resulting in more hours of daylight,** with earlier sunrises and later sunsets.
    - According to Hindu astrology, Vernal Equinox is known as Vasant Vishuva or Vasant Sampat.
    - The Spring equinox brings earlier sunrises, later sunsets, and sprouting plants in the northern hemisphere.
    - **Later sunrises, earlier sunsets,** chillier winds, and dry and falling leaves are observed in the south of the **equator (southern hemisphere).**

Source-TOI

Rapid Fire Current Affairs

World Water Day

World Water Day (WWD) is celebrated on **22nd March Every Year. The** United Nations General Assembly issued a resolution in 1993 declaring every year March 22 as World Day for Water. The **theme for WWD 2023 is 'Accelerating the change to solve the water and sanitation crisis',** emphasizing the necessity of taking stern action to address the global water crisis.

The main objective of the day is to aware and inspire people to sustainably manage freshwater resources and learn more about water-related issues like water pollution, water scarcity, inadequate water, and lack of sanitation, and take appropriate steps to make a difference. According to the **United Nations**, the idea behind celebrating the day is to "support the achievement of sustainable development goal (SDG) **6: water and sanitation for all by 2030."**

Read more: World Water Day

INS Androth

The **INS Androth**, second in a series of eight **Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC)**, was launched in Kolkata. INS Androth draws its name from the largest and longest island known as **Androth Island**, in the **Lakshadweep archipelago**. It was built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE)** in Kolkata.

INS Androth propelled by **three diesel-driven water jets,** this ship can attain a maximum speed of 25 knots. Their primary role of INS Androth is to conduct **anti-submarine operations in coastal waters, low intensity maritime operations** and mine laying operations. These ships are also capable of **full-scale sub surface surveillance of coastal waters and various surface platforms and coordinated ASW operations with aircraft.** These ships may be smaller in size but also carry **lightweight torpedoes, ASW rockets and mines, a close-in weapon system (with a 30 mm gun) and 16.7 mm stabilized remote-controlled guns.**

World Down Syndrome Day

Every year since 2006, **March 21** is observed as the **World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD)**. To raise awareness about Down syndrome and advocate for the rights, inclusion, and well-being of people with the condition. Down syndrome is a genetic condition that affects people of all races, backgrounds and ethnicity. The day was officially recognized by the **United Nations General Assembly** in 2011.The **Theme for World Down Syndrome Day 2023 is "With Us Not for Us".**

Down syndrome happens when there is an **extra copy of the 21st** chromosome, which leads to physical and intellectual disabilities. People with Down syndrome generally have distinct facial features and have several health complications such as **heart defects, hearing and vision problems, and thyroid conditions.** The date was selected because Down syndrome is caused by the presence of a **third copy of the 21st chromosome, and 21/3 (March 21st) represents this genetic condition**

Substance Abuse in India

Recently, in concert with the **Home Ministry's** effort to prosecute drug providers and traffickers, the **Social Justice Ministry** is waging a campaign to diminish drug demand by portraying addicts as victims. According to **The Mental Health Care Act, 2017** substance abuse disorders are included in the definition of mental illness in India. The Union government's measures to address this issue come under the umbrella of the **National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR)**. This involves running the **Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan** in 372 vulnerable districts, 340 integrated rehabilitation centers for addicts, 48 community-based peer-led intervention centers, and 71 outreach and drop-in centers.

Read More: Mental Healthcare Act, 2017