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## Current Affairs - 04 October 2024

### WHAT IS THE JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)?

Without India doing a large part of the heavy lifting, it is unlikely that the world will meet the Sustainable Development Goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, UNAIDS director for the Asia Pacific said recently.



# UNAIDS

- It is an innovative **joint venture of the United Nations family** established in 1994.
- It leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of **zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths.**
- UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **UNAIDS fulfils its mission by:**
  - **Uniting the efforts** of the United Nations system, civil society, national governments, the private sector, global institutions and people living with and most affected by HIV;
  - **Speaking out in solidarity** with the people most affected by HIV in defense of human dignity, human rights, and gender equality;
  - **Mobilizing political, technical, scientific, and financial resources** and holding ourselves and others accountable for results;
  - Empowering **agents of change with strategic information** and evidence to influence and ensure that resources are targeted where they deliver the greatest impact and bring about a prevention revolution; and
  - Supporting inclusive country leadership for sustainable responses that are integral to and integrated with national health and development efforts.



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- It leads the **world's most extensive data collection** on HIV epidemiology, programme coverage and finance and publishes the most authoritative and up-to-date information on the HIV epidemic—vital for an effective AIDS response.
- The Joint Programme is coordinated by the UNAIDS Secretariat, **headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.**

### INTERNATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY HUB

Recently, the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister of India has approved India's membership to the Energy Efficiency Hub.



## Energy Efficiency Hub

- It is a global platform dedicated to fostering collaboration and **promoting energy efficiency worldwide.**
- It was **established in 2020** as the successor to the **International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC)**, in which India was a member.
- The hub brings together governments, international organizations, and private sector entities to share knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions.
- **Member countries:** **Sixteen countries** have joined the Hub (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Russia, Saudi Arabia, United States and United Kingdom).
- **Implementing agency:** The **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**, the statutory agency, has been designated as the **implementing agency** for the Hub on behalf of India.
- BEE will play a crucial role in facilitating India's participation in the Hub's activities and ensuring that India's contributions align with its national energy efficiency goals.
- **Significance:**
  - India will gain **access to a vast network of experts and resources**, enabling it to enhance its domestic energy efficiency initiatives.

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- The country will also **contribute to global efforts to address climate change** by promoting energy-efficient technologies and practices.
- The country's participation in this global platform will help to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy and **improve energy security**.
- This move solidifies India's **commitment to sustainable development** and aligns with its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### PM INTERNSHIP SCHEME



- It will enhance **youth employability in India** by offering them hands-on **exposure to real-world business environments**.
- The scheme represents a transformative opportunity to bridge the skills gap and drive sustainable growth in India.
- **Aim:** The scheme aims to provide **internship opportunities to one crore youth over five years**, in the top 500 companies.
- The pilot project will be implemented through an online portal managed by **the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)**.
- A **monthly stipend of ₹4,500** will be provided to the interns from the **central government** via DBT (Direct Benefit transfer), with an **additional ₹500 offset** provided by the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (**CSR**)
- They will also be provided a **one-time grant of Rs 6,000** upon joining and insurance coverage under PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and PM Suraksha Bima Yojana.
- **Internship period:** One year
- **Who is eligible for the scheme?**
  - Candidates **aged between 21 and 24 years** who are not engaged in full-time employment are eligible for the one-year internship programme.
  - Internships are available to those who have passed **class 10 or higher**.
  - Individuals from families with government **jobs are excluded**.

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- It is **not open to post-graduates**.
- A candidate **who has graduated from premier institutes** such as IIT, IIM, or IISER, and those who have CA, or CMA qualifications **would not be eligible** to apply for this internship.
- Anyone from a household that includes a person who earned an **income of ₹8 lakh or more in 2023-24**, will **not be eligible**.

### Benefits of the scheme

- It will provide **on-the-job training to youth** and exposure to real-life work environments.
  - The scheme will also benefit the industry by **creating a pipeline of skilled**, work-ready youth who can be employed post-internship both in large as well as micro, small and medium enterprises.
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### INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL DEVICE REGULATORS FORUM (IMDRF)



- The IMDRF was **established in 2011**.
  - It is a group of **global medical device regulators** whose aim is to speed up the adoption of international medical device regulatory harmonisation and convergence.
  - **Members:** Its members include national regulatory authorities of the U.S., Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Russia, China, South Korea, Singapore and the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.
  - The membership helps to **harmonize regulatory requirements** across the globe, which **reduces the complexity for manufacturers** and helps in safeguarding public health by promoting collaboration, harmonizing regulations, and promoting convergence.
  - It also helps to support innovation and **timely access to new medical devices**.
  - **Significance to India**
    - India will participate in IMDRF Open Sessions to **have an information exchange on technical topics** with other regulators, discuss on latest medical
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device regulatory strategies and trends, provide feedback on India's experience and perspectives.

- This will strengthen the CDSCO's medical device regulatory system, helping meet emerging technical challenges that are increasingly diverse, to ensure the protection of public health and safety, and continue to maintain the goal of international recognition for its Medical Device regulation.

### CLASSICAL LANGUAGE



Recently, the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister of India has approved to confer the status of Classical Language to Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese and Bengali languages.

#### Classical Language Status Criteria:

- The recognition of a classical language is based on criteria established by a **Linguistic Experts Committee**.
- According to the committee, the following revised benchmarks must be met for a language to be considered "classical":
  - **High antiquity** of (its) early texts/recorded history over a period of **1500- 2000 years**.
  - A **body of ancient literature/texts**, which is considered a heritage by generations of speakers.
  - Knowledge texts, especially prose texts in addition to poetry, epigraphical and inscriptional evidence.
  - The Classical Languages and literature could be distinct from its current form or could be discontinuous with later forms of its offshoots.
- **Other Recognised Classical Languages are: Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Telugu (2008), Kannada (2008), Malayalam (2013) and Odia (2014).**

#### Benefits of Classical Language Status



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- Once a language is designated as classical, the Ministry of Education provides various benefits to promote it, including:
    - **Two major international awards** annually for scholars of eminence in the language.
    - Establishment of a **Centre of Excellence for Studies** in the Classical Language.
    - Requesting the **University Grants Commission (UGC)** to create Professional Chairs in Central Universities dedicated to the classical language.
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### PRISON REFORM IN INDIA

#### Why in News?

The Supreme Court issued a series of directives to the Centre and states to ensure that **no inmate is subjected to work assignments or housing arrangements based on their caste**. The SC declared this **provision in various jail manuals “unconstitutional”** for violating the inmates’ right to dignity, equality and non-discrimination.

The ruling ended the long-standing practice of discrimination against prisoners based on caste and demanded prompt reforms in all states and UTs.

#### Issues Related to Prisons in India:

- **Fundamental rights of prisoners:**
  - Article 21 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty.
  - **Article 39A** ensures free legal aid for those in need.
- **Key issues in Indian prisons:** Prison conditions in India face several critical challenges that **impact inmates' rights and welfare**. These include -
  - **Overcrowding:**
    - Currently, prisons in India **operate at 117% capacity**, primarily due to a high number of under-trial prisoners.
    - The SC has emphasised the right to speedy justice under Article 21 of the Constitution, but many cases remain unresolved.

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- **Unhygienic conditions:** Many inmates lack access to proper medical facilities. Female prisoners often do not receive adequate sanitary products and basic health services.
- **Custodial torture:** Despite the **1986 DK Basu judgement** prohibiting torture, reports of custodial violence continue, with increasing cases of custodial deaths.
- **Delays in trials:** Lengthy legal processes disrupt prison administration and prolong inmates' suffering. The right to a speedy trial has been recognised but is often not upheld.
- **Challenges for women prisoners:** The number of female inmates is rising, but they often face inadequate facilities. There is also a lack of dedicated women's prisons.

### UK HANDS OVER CHAGOS ISLANDS TO MAURITIUS

#### Chagos Islands

- **Geographical location**



- Chagos Archipelago is located in the central Indian Ocean, about 500 kilometers south of the Maldives and roughly 1,600 kilometers southwest of India.

- The Chagos archipelago comprises of 58 islands, with Diego Garcia being the largest and most significant.

- **Colonial history of Chagos**

- According to a report, the Chagos Islands were discovered by Portuguese navigators in the 16th century, who mapped and named some of them.
- The Dutch explored the islands next but did not settle there.
- The islands later came under French control, along with Mauritius and Réunion, and the French gave additional names to the islands.
- They brought enslaved workers from Madagascar and Mozambique, followed by laborers from southern India, to work on coconut plantations.

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- After Napoleon's defeat, Britain took control of both Chagos and Mauritius.
  - In 1814, France ceded the islands to the British.
- **Significance of Chagos**
  - **Geostrategic Location:** The archipelago's location in the central Indian Ocean makes it strategically valuable for monitoring major shipping lanes, ensuring security in the region, and projecting military power across a wide area.
  - **UK-US Military Base:** Diego Garcia, the largest island, hosts a major UK-US military base, which is crucial for operations in the Indian Ocean and surrounding regions.
    - It serves as a logistics, surveillance, and intelligence hub for both the UK and the US, playing a key role in military operations in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.

### UK hands over Chagos Islands to Mauritius

- **About the treaty**
  - The UK and Mauritius reached an agreement where the UK ceded its claims over the Chagos Archipelago.
  - The agreement allows the UK to retain sovereign rights over Diego Garcia, where a joint UK-US military base will remain operational for an initial period of 99 years.
  - Mauritius is now allowed to implement a resettlement program on the islands, except for Diego Garcia.
  - Additionally, the UK has pledged to create a trust fund to benefit the displaced Chagossians.
- **Role of India**
  - India has maintained steadfast support to Mauritius' claims over the Chagos Islands.
    - It voted in favour of the island country at the UNGA in 2019.



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- In recent years, India has attempted to deepen its ties with Mauritius amidst China's ever-increasing assertiveness in the Indian Ocean.
  - Earlier this year, an India-built airstrip and a jetty was inaugurated at Agaléga, a two-island dependency of Mauritius in the Western Indian Ocean.
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### KEY FACTS ABOUT CHARON

Scientists have detected the gases carbon dioxide and hydrogen peroxide on Pluto's largest moon, 'Charon'.



**Charon is the largest of Pluto's five moons**, about half the size of Pluto.

- It was discovered telescopically on June 22, 1978, by James W. Christy and Robert S. Harrington at the U.S. Naval Observatory station in Flagstaff, Arizona.
  - The moon was named for Charon, the ferryman of dead souls to the realm of Hades (the Greek counterpart of the Roman god Pluto) in Greek mythology.
  - Charon is 754 miles (1,214 kilometers) across, and Pluto is about 1,400 miles wide.
  - Its mass is more than **one-tenth of Pluto's mass**.
  - Since Charon is **so large and massive with respect to Pluto**— the two are **sometimes referred to as a double dwarf planet system**.
  - The distance between them is 12,200 miles (19,640 km).
  - The **same surfaces of Charon and Pluto always face each other**, a phenomenon called **mutual tidal locking**.
  - In addition, Charon always shows the same hemisphere to Pluto, because (like many other moons) its rotation period is identical to its orbital period.
  - **Charon orbits Pluto every 6.4 Earth days**.
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