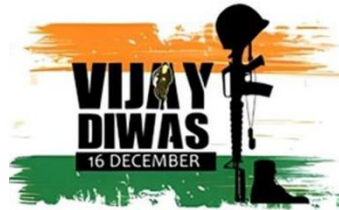


WHAT IS VIJAY DIWAS?

Leaders across the political lines paid tribute to the soldiers who fought in the 1971 war, on the occasion of 52nd Vijay Diwas recently.



About Vijay Diwas:

- Vijay Diwas is commemorated on December 16 every year to honour the victory of the Indian armed forces over Pakistan in the 1971 war and to pay tribute to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country.
- The day is also observed in Bangladesh as 'Bijoy Dibos' or Victory Day, marking the country's formal independence from Pakistan.
- History:
 - The 1971 war was instigated by the genocide perpetrated by the oppressive Pakistani military regime, led by General Yahya Khan, against the people of East Pakistan.
 - The conflict erupted when the Sheikh Mujibur Rahman-led Awami League emerged as the winner in the 1970 elections.
 - Post-elections, the Pakistani military used force to influence the results, leading to a mass exodus of people from East Pakistan.
 - India intervened during this critical period.
 - The then-Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, provided refuge to those who fled from the other side of the border.
 - The situation escalated on December 3, 1971, when Pakistan launched air strikes on 11 Indian airbases, compelling Indira Gandhi to instruct India's Army Chief, General Sam Manekshaw, to initiate a full-scale war against Pakistan.
 - India supported Bangladesh nationalist groups and executed 'Operation Trident,' led by the Indian Navy, to target Karachi Port.

- Following a 13-day battle, India secured a resounding triumph over Pakistan on December 16, 1971, leading to the creation of Bangladesh from the former East Pakistan.
 - On this significant day, General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi of Pakistan signed the Instrument of Surrender, surrendering with 93,000 Pakistani soldiers before the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini of Bangladesh, marking the most substantial military surrender post-World War II.
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THE GPAI NEW DELHI DECLARATION ON AI: HOW IT FOUND MIDDLE PATH BETWEEN PROMOTION AND REGULATION OF AI

Why in News?

- The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit 2023 (New Delhi) has unanimously adopted the New Delhi declaration, **attempting to find a balance between innovation and the risks** associated with AI systems.

Highlights of the GPAI New Delhi Declaration on AI:

- The declaration underscored -
 - **The need to mitigate risks** arising from the development and deployment of AI systems and
 - **Promote equitable access** to critical resources for AI innovation, including computing and high-quality diverse datasets.
- **It has attempted to find a balance** between innovation and the risks associated with AI systems.
- **The declaration recognises the rapid pace of improvement** in advanced AI systems and their potential to generate economic growth, innovation and jobs across various sectors as well as to benefit societies.
- While it is generally **optimistic about the economic gains that AI can offer**, it also raises **concerns about justice, privacy, and intellectual property rights** that must be addressed.

- The declaration said that a **global framework for use of AI** should be rooted in
 - Democratic values and human rights;
 - Safeguarding dignity and well-being;
 - Ensuring personal data protection;
 - The protection of applicable intellectual property rights,
 - Privacy and security;
 - Fostering innovation; and
 - Promoting trustworthy, responsible, sustainable and human-centred use of AI.
- The declaration also agreed to support **AI innovation in the agriculture sector** as a new “thematic priority”.

India’s Position on the Regulation of AI:

- Even as India looks to unlock the potential economic benefits of AI systems, **its own thinking on AI regulation has undergone a significant change** -
 - From not considering any legal intervention on regulating AI in the country (few months ago),
 - To now moving in the direction of actively formulating regulations based on a “**risk-based, user-harm**” approach.
- At the GPAI Summit 2023, **the Indian PM flagged the dual potential of AI** -
 - While it can be 21st century’s biggest development tool,
 - It can also potentially play a very destructive role and call for a global framework that will provide guardrails and ensure its responsible use.

TAX INSPECTORS WITHOUT BORDERS PROGRAMME



Recently, India has been chosen as the Partner Administration for the Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) programme and will provide Tax Experts for this.

About Tax Inspectors without Borders programme:

- It is a joint initiative of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**.
- It was launched in 2015.
- It aims to strengthen developing countries' **auditing capacity and multinationals'** compliance worldwide.
- **Duration:** This programme is expected to be of 12-18 months duration.
- In this, India in collaboration with the TIWB Secretariat and support of the UNDP Country Office, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean aims to aid Saint Lucia in strengthening its tax administration by transferring technical knowledge and skills to its tax administration, and through sharing of best practices.
- The focus of the programme will be on effective use of automatic exchange of information under **the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) framework**.
- This programme complements the broader efforts of the international community to strengthen co-operation on tax matters and contribute to the domestic resource mobilisation efforts of developing countries.

THE FLIPSIDE OF MEDICAL TOURISM: ORGAN TRANSPLANT RACKETS

Context

- Newspapers carry **frequent stories of acts of spontaneous solidarity by ordinary Indians donating organs**.
- Simultaneously, **there is news of scandals, often involving the buying of organs from the vulnerable**.
- Every news on organ transplantation poses difficult questions and tests us collectively and therefore **it becomes imperative to understand the flipside of medical tourism and challenges in tackling organ transplant rackets**.

Challenges/Complexities in Transplantation Medical Tourism

- **Complex Patient Dynamics**

- Transplantation **medical tourism** involves very sick patients navigating a **foreign country with a different language and culture.**
- Post-operative care for both donors and recipients extends beyond the operation, **raising questions about the effectiveness of follow-up care upon their return.**
- **Establishing Relationships and Distinguishing Donations**
 - The challenge lies in establishing a relationship between donor and recipient when they travel across borders.
 - **Differentiating between paid and voluntary donations becomes crucial,** requiring a robust system to prevent exploitation and coercion.
- **Issues with Due Diligence and Certificates**
 - Embassies are tasked with **issuing certificates ruling out coercion or payment, but due diligence in this regard appears lacking.**
 - Experience suggests that **there may be gaps in the verification process, compromising the authenticity of these certificates.**
- **Impartiality of Authorisation Committees**
 - Authorisation Committees in India are **entrusted with ruling out organ trade, but conflicts of interest may compromise their impartiality.**
 - Hospitals, driven by the pursuit of numbers and revenue, may inadvertently contribute to ethical lapses.
- **Informal Referrals and Monetary Commissions**
 - In the absence of a well-organised mechanism, **informal referrals based on monetary commissions are prevalent.**
 - Most foreign patients are recruited through agents who handle travel logistics and paperwork, potentially introducing vulnerabilities.
- **Questions on Transplant Doctors' Awareness**
 - Questions arise about whether transplant doctors are **aware of or misled by forged paperwork, raising concerns about their role in detecting subterfuge.**

- While doctors claim it is not their responsibility to detect deceit, **professional oaths place an ethical obligation on them to uphold the integrity of the medical profession.**
- **Impact on Trust in Healthcare**
 - In a country where trust in healthcare is already under threat, **news of a substantial number of foreigners receiving transplants poses a double-edged challenge**
 - Trust is **crucial for the success of the deceased donation after death project**, and previous incidents of foreigners receiving heart transplants resulted in a significant drop in donations.
- **Revenue Generation Model of Private Hospitals**
 - Private hospitals, equipped with the capacity to perform transplants, are positioned to meet the demand swiftly, contributing to revenue generation.
 - **The monetised health system is prone to seizing opportunities**, whether legitimate or, if necessary, through illegitimate means to meet the demands of patients seeking transplants.
- **Global Disparities**
 - Global disparities in the availability of organ transplants **lead patients to seek solutions abroad, often in countries like India where medical tourism is thriving.**
 - The ability to pay for transplantation services becomes a crucial factor, **further highlighting the economic dimensions of healthcare access.**

Conclusion

- The dilemmas associated with organ transplantation **highlight the complex interplay of scientific progress, economic interests, etc., to address challenges** in healthcare access and organ donation.
- Balancing these challenges and concerns of healthcare **requires a careful and collaborative approach.**

BARRACUDA BOAT

In a move towards eco-friendly maritime transportation, the Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat, was ceremoniously launched at the Navgathi Panavally Yard in Alappuzha.



About Barracuda Boat:

- It is named after the swift, long fish, **Barracuda**.
- It can be deployed even in the rough seas as a workboat to ferry up to 12 passengers and cargo.
- **Features:** This vessel can attain a top speed of 12.5 knots (23 kmph) and has a range of seven hours on a single charge.
 - It has twin 50 kW electric motors, a marine-grade LFP battery, and 6 kW solar power, epitomising efficient and clean energy usage.
 - This cutting-edge vessel was jointly developed by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and Navalt**.

Key facts about Barracuda fish:

- It is any of about 20 species of **predacious fishes** of the family **Sphyraenidae**.
- Barracudas are primarily fish eaters, preying on such smaller fishes as mullets, anchovies, and grunts.
- **Distribution:** These fishes are found in all **warm and tropical regions**; some also range into more temperate areas.

FLYING WING TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATOR

Recently, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully carried out a flight trial of Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator in Karnataka's Chitradurga.



About the Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator:

- It is an indigenous **high-speed flying-wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)**.
- It is designed and developed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment.
- The maiden flight of this aircraft was demonstrated in July 2022.
- These flight-tests led to achievements in development of robust aerodynamic and control systems; integrated **real-time and hardware-in-loop simulation**, and state-of-the-art **Ground Control Station**.
- The team had optimised the avionic systems, integration and flight operations towards the successful seventh flight in final configuration.
- The aircraft prototype, with a complex arrowhead wing platform, is designed and manufactured with **light-weight carbon prepreg composite** material developed indigenously.
- The autonomous landing of this high-speed UAV, without the need for ground radars/infrastructure/pilot, showcased a unique capability demonstration, **allowing take-off and landing from any runway with surveyed coordinates**.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE UNIFICATION OF PRIVATE LAW

Recently, India's Uma Sekhar was elected to the governing council of the Rome-based International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) within the first round at the elections held in Rome.



About the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law:

- It is an independent intergovernmental Organisation.
- It was **set up in 1926** as an auxiliary organ of the League of Nations, following the demise of the League it was re-established in 1940 on the basis of a multilateral agreement, the UNIDROIT Statute.
- **Members:** It consists of **65 Member States** are drawn from the five continents and represent a variety of different legal, economic and political systems as well as different cultural backgrounds.

- **Funding:** The Institute is financed by annual contributions from its Member States which are fixed by the General Assembly.
 - **Structure:**
 - It has an essentially three-tiered structure, made up of a **Secretariat, a Governing Council and a General Assembly.**
 - The Secretariat is the executive organ of UNIDROIT responsible carrying out its Work Programme from day to day.
 - It is headed by a Secretary-General appointed by the Governing Council on the nomination of the President of the Institute.
 - The Secretary-General is assisted by a team of international civil servants and supporting staff.
 - The **Governing Council** supervises all policy aspects.
 - The General Assembly is the ultimate decision-making organ of UNIDROIT.
 - **Languages:** The official languages are English, French, German, Italian and Spanish; its working languages are English and French.
 - **India has been a member** of this organisation since 1950.
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