

WORLD AIDS DAY 2023

World AIDS Day is observed every year on December 1.



About World AIDS Day:

- It is observed every year on **December 1** to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS.
- The day is an opportunity to end stigmas associated with this disease, and this day also honours people who lost their precious lives and engage in lives that support HIV/AIDS research and advanced treatment.
- It was first observed in 1988, when the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** recognised the day.
- **The theme of World AIDS Day 2023 is– “Let Communities Lead”**

What is HIV/AIDS?

- **Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)** is a **chronic, potentially life-threatening condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).**
- **HIV attacks the body’s immune system, making a person more vulnerable to other infections and diseases.**
- **If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS.**
- **Transmission:**
 - It is a **sexually transmitted infection (STI).**
 - It can also be **spread by contact with infected blood, from illicit injection drug use, or by sharing needles.**
 - It can also be **spread from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.**
- **Treatment:**
 - There is **currently no effective cure. Once people get HIV, they have it for life.**

- However, **with proper medical care, HIV can be controlled.** People with HIV who get effective HIV treatment (called antiretroviral therapy, or ART) **can live long,** healthy lives and protect their partners.
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BROADCAST REGULATION 3.0, COMMISSIONS AND OMISSIONS

Context

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) released the **Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill 2023**, marking a **significant step in the regulation of broadcasting.**
- The bill is part of a series of endeavours to regulate broadcasting in an integrated manner.

Key Highlights of Draft of Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill 2023

- **Consolidation and Modernisation**
 - It addresses a long-standing need of consolidating and updating the regulatory provisions for various broadcasting services under a single legislative framework.
 - This move streamlines the regulatory process, making it more efficient and contemporary.
 - It extends its regulatory purview to encompass broadcasting over-the-top (OTT) content and digital news and current affairs - currently regulated through IT Act 2000 and regulations made there under.
- **Contemporary Definitions and Future-Ready Provisions:** To keep pace with the evolving technologies and services, **the bill introduces comprehensive definitions for contemporary broadcasting terms and incorporates provisions** for emerging broadcasting technologies.
- **Strengthens the Self-Regulation Regime:** It enhances self-regulation with the introduction of ‘Content evaluation committees’ and evolves the existing Inter-Departmental Committee into a more participative and broader ‘Broadcast Advisory Council’.

- **Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities:** The bill addresses the specific needs of persons with disabilities by providing for enabling provisions for issue of comprehensive accessibility guidelines.

Concerns Surrounding the Bill

- **Absence of Privacy Protection:** The Bill completely lacks any guardrails to shield the privacy of subscribers and audiences in practices of data collection.
- **Inclusion of OTT Content Suppliers as Broadcasting Services:** A major concern is the Bill including OTT content suppliers in the definition of broadcasting services. It has also been proposed in TRAI's 'National Broadcasting Policy'.
- **Impact on News Media and Journalists**
 - For the news media and their audience, there is a different concern.
 - The Bill's **expanded definition of broadcasting narrows the conditions** in which journalists and news outlets that are not a part of large, multi-lingual television networks can continue their professional pursuits.
- **Questionable Directions and Oversight: Content Evaluation Committee**
 - While it is fruitful for a news outlet to have an oversight body, **warranting a Content Evaluation Committee takes the Bill in a questionable direction.**
 - Since the role of an internal oversight mechanism is to maintain the accuracy of news and quality of journalism, **its design is best left to individual news outlets.**
 - **They could decide** whether to design this along the lines of an ombudsperson, as some newspapers attempted in the past, or akin to a Readers' Editor, as practised by few online news outlets.
- **Leeway to the Government in the Name of Public Interest**
 - The Bill **empowers the government to inspect broadcasters without intimating them in advance**, and to impound their equipment, presumably including those issued to their employees.

- Moreover, breaches of the Programme Code and Advertisement Code result in the removal or alteration of content, supplementing existing actions such as halting transmissions for specific periods.
- Lastly, the **Bill provides significant authority to the government to restrict broadcasting and distribution in the name of ‘public interest’**, a term alarmingly left undefined.
- **These intrusive mechanisms heighten the susceptibility of professional news providers to external pressure groups.**
- This should be a **cause for concern for those deliberating on legislating the Bill, regardless of their parliamentary affiliations.**

Way Forward: A Regulation on Conflict of Interest is the Need of the Hour

- **The Indian government has not effectively managed conflicts of interest in the media industry**, especially the connections between MSOs (Multi-Service Operators), politicians, and vertical integration.
- As this has led to a loss of trust, **a regulation on conflicts of interest is the need of the hour.**

Conclusion

- As the most recent extension of efforts to formulate a comprehensive regulatory framework for broadcasting, **this Bill should seize the opportunity to safeguard press freedom and diversity.**
- To achieve this goal, **it needs to proactively address certain notable omissions, reevaluate intrusive commissions, and refine potentially beneficial provisions.**



PRADHAN MANTRI GARIB KALYAN ANNA YOJANA (PMGKAY)

The government recently extended the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) scheme for another five years.

About Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY):

- It was launched by the Indian government in April 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It is designed to provide financial assistance to economically weaker sections affected by the pandemic.
- The scheme encompasses the distribution of 5 kg of free food grains each month, along with cash transfers to women and elderly individuals.
- It was introduced as part of the broader Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package, aiming to offer relief to those adversely affected by the pandemic, especially the poor and marginalised.
- As per the scheme, the government offers 5 kg of free food grains each month in addition to the subsidised ration given to families covered by the Public Distribution System under the National Food Security Act.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** The benefits of PMGKAY are accessible to families meeting specific eligibility criteria.
 - Families belonging to the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH) categories will be eligible for the scheme. PHH is to be identified by State Governments/Union Territory Administrations as per criteria evolved by them. AAY families are to be identified by States/UTs as per the criteria prescribed by the Central Government:
 - Households headed by widows, or terminally ill persons, or disabled persons, or persons aged 60 years or more with no assured means of subsistence or societal support.
 - Widows, or terminally ill persons, or disabled persons, or persons aged 60 years or more or single women or single men with no family or societal support or assured means of subsistence.
 - Additionally, all primitive tribal households, landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans/craftsmen such as potters, tanners, slum dwellers,

and persons earning their livelihood on a daily basis in the informal sector like porters, coolies, rickshaw pullers, hand cart pullers, and other similar categories in both rural and urban areas are also eligible for the scheme.

- All the citizens are eligible who belong to Below Poverty Line families.

EXERCISE MILAN

The next edition of Exercise MILAN is scheduled to be held in February 2024.



About Exercise Milan

- It is a biennial **multilateral naval exercise that began in 1995**.
- It has since significantly expanded in scope and scale to become the largest exercise held by India.
- It was started **with the participation of only four countries**, viz., Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand, in the 1995 edition, the exercise has since transitioned leaps and bounds in terms of the number of participants and complexity of exercises.
- Originally conceived in consonance with India's '**Look East Policy**', MILAN expanded in ensuing years with the Government of India's '**Act East Policy**' and **Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) initiative** to include participation from other Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs).
- The mid-planning conference of Milan-24 was held in October this year. The last edition of Milan, which is held off the coast of Visakhapatnam, saw participation from over 40 countries.

What is the SAGAR initiative?

- It is an **Indian foreign policy doctrine** that was introduced in 2015.
- The aim of SAGAR is to enhance **cooperation and mutual trust between India and its neighbouring countries**, particularly in the Indian Ocean region.

- The SAGAR policy has several components, including ensuring maritime security and safety, promoting sustainable development and economic growth, and strengthening cultural and people-to-people ties between nations.
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KALBELIYA DANCE

Recently, during the Rajasthan International Folk Festival, artists performed the Kalbeliya dance.



About Kalbeliya Dance:

- It is a folk dance from Rajasthan.
 - It is well known by other names like '**Sapera Dance**' or '**Snake Charmer Dance**'.
 - It is particularly performed by a Rajasthani tribe called 'Kalbelia'.
 - This dance has become so well-known throughout the world that this dance and its songs have been included in UNESCO's representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity since 2010.
 - In Kalbelia dance, males play various traditional instruments and females perform the dance.
 - It is one of the most sensuous dances among all Rajasthani dances.
 - In this dance form, the main performers are female dancers who dance and swirl, replicating the movements of a serpent.
 - The dancers wear brightly coloured skirts, blouses, and heavy jewellery.
 - **Instruments:** The male musicians typically play the dhol (a drum), the pungli (a snake charmer's pipe), and the khanjari (a tambourine).
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WHAT IS THE LOSS AND DAMAGE FUND?

Recently, on the opening day of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) climate conference in Dubai, a loss and damage fund to help vulnerable countries cope with the impact of climate change was officially launched.



About Loss and Damage Fund:

- It was first announced during **COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.**
- It is a **global financial package to ensure the rescue and rehabilitation** of countries facing the cascading effects of climate change.
- The term refers to **the compensation** that rich nations, whose industrial growth has resulted in global warming and driven the planet into a climate crisis, must pay to poor nations, whose carbon footprint is low but are facing the brunt of rising sea levels, floods, crippling droughts, and intense cyclones, among others.
- The changing climate has impacted lives, livelihoods, biodiversity, cultural traditions, and identities.
- Loss and damage is often categorised as **either economic or non-economic.**
 - **Economic loss** and damage are negative impacts that one can assign a monetary value to. These are things such as the costs of **rebuilding infrastructure that has been damaged due to floods** or the loss of revenue from crops that were destroyed due to drought.
 - **Non-economic loss** and damage are **negative impacts** where it is difficult or infeasible to assign a monetary value. These are things such as **trauma from experiencing a tropical cyclone**, loss of community due to displacement of people, or loss of biodiversity.
- The **World Bank will oversee the loss and damage fund** in the beginning, with the source of funds being rich nations such as the US, the UK, and the EU, as well as some developing countries.

GAJRAJ SURAKSHA

Indian Railways has introduced a cutting-edge technology named 'Gajraj' to prevent elephant accidents on railway tracks



About Gajraj Suraksha:

- It uses an **AI-based algorithm** and a network of **sensitive**

optical fibre cables to detect elephants getting close to railway tracks.

- It aims to **address the issue of elephant fatalities** resulting from train accidents.
 - **Working**
 - Gajraj Suraksha senses **pressure waves generated by** the movement of **elephants** along the tracks.
 - As elephants move, the optical fibres detect vibrations caused by their footsteps.
 - These vibrations trigger signals within the optical fibre network, enabling the system to identify the presence of **elephants up to 200 metres** ahead of their arrival on the track.
 - The OFC-based Intrusion Detection System works by sending alarms to station masters whenever movement is detected along the tracks.
 - The network is designed in such a way that **it can track the movement of the elephant** with great accuracy and report it to nearby station masters.
 - This allows them to promptly inform locomotive drivers in the affected areas.
 - This quick communication ensures that trains can be slowed down or stopped, preventing potential collisions with elephants.
 - Indian Railway is planning to introduce this system in **West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Assam, Kerala, certain parts of Chhattisgarh, and Tamil Nadu.**
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