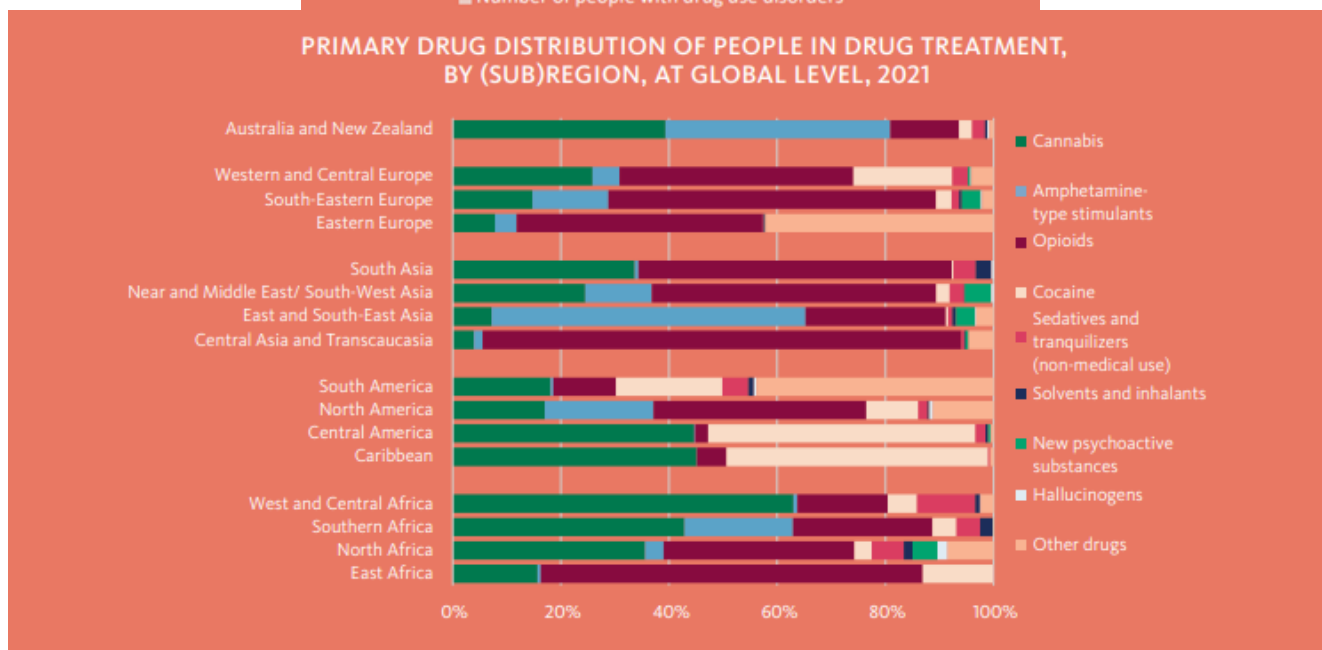
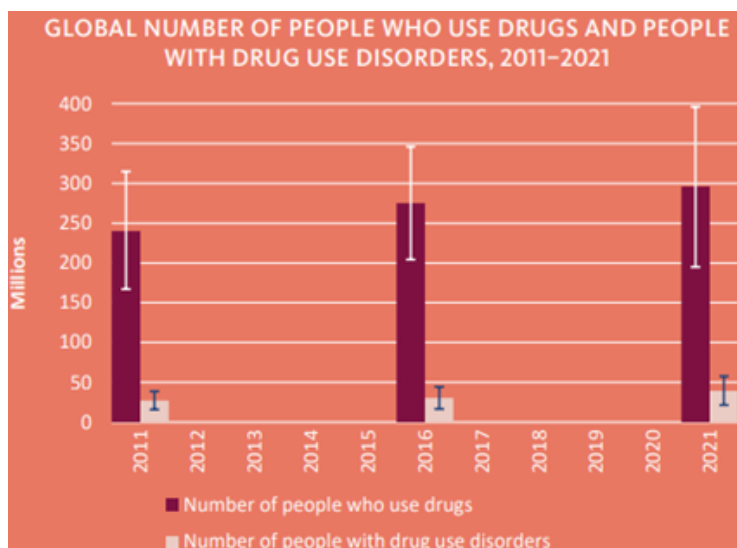


27 June, 2023

World Drug Report

Context: The UNODC World Drug Report 2023 raises alarm about the convergence of crises due to the relentless expansion of illicit drug markets.

- Global estimate of people who inject drugs in 2021: 13.2 million, a significant 18% increase from previous estimates.
- Global drug use in 2021: Over 296 million people, showing a substantial 23% increase over the past decade.
- Number of people with drug use disorders: 39.5 million, a staggering 45% increase over the last 10 years.
- Only one in five people suffering from drug-related disorders were in treatment for drug use in 2021.
- In Africa, 70% of people in treatment for drug-related disorders are under the age of 35.
- The report highlights the impact of drug trafficking and crimes on the environment in the Amazon Basin.
- Synthetic drugs are on the rise and gaining dominance in illicit drug markets.



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27 June, 2023

India's Drugs Producing Neighbourhood

➤ Global Crescent

- The Golden Crescent, situated in Southwest Asia, is composed of three contiguous countries: Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran from East to West.
- Among the countries in this region, Iran is the largest, Afghanistan is the only landlocked country, and Pakistan shares the most land boundaries.
- The Golden Crescent is globally recognized as the primary region for illicit opium production.
- The potential opium production in this region is estimated at 5,020 metric tons.
- Afghanistan is the leading contributor to illicit opium production, accounting for 4,950 metric tons.
- Pakistan, on the other hand, has a significantly lower opium production, with only 70 metric tons in 2005.
- While Iran is not a major opium producing country in the Golden Crescent, it serves as a crucial trans-shipment country for the illicit drug trade.



➤ Golden Triangle

- The Golden Triangle is situated in Southeast Asia and consists of three neighbouring countries: Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar.
- Myanmar is the largest country in the Golden Triangle and has the highest illicit opium production in the region, estimated at 30,900 metric tons.
- Laos, the only landlocked country in the Golden Triangle and Southeast Asia, serves primarily as a trans-shipment country.
- Thailand has the largest coastline among the countries in the region.
- The Golden Triangle is the world's second largest illicit opium producing region, with a potential production of 5,020 metric tons.
- Laos has an opium production of 10,000 metric tons, while Thailand has the lowest production at 128 metric tons in 2005.
- Thailand and Myanmar are known for their involvement in money laundering activities.

Wagner Mutiny

Context: Yevgeny Prigozhin, chief of Russia's Wagner Private Military Company, sparked a momentary mutiny against the national defence establishment on June 24, resulting in an unprecedented internal security crisis for Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Face to Face Centres



27 June, 2023

- On June 24, Yevgeny Prigozhin, chief of Russia's Wagner Private Military Company, launched a mutiny against Russia's defense establishment, demanding the ouster of top defense brass.
- Prigozhin led a "march of justice" with armed men and armored vehicles toward Moscow but refrained from directly attacking the Kremlin.
- The crisis revealed a feud between the Ministry of Defense and a powerful warlord, bringing Russia to the brink of an open civil war.
- President Vladimir Putin opted for negotiations to resolve the situation, highlighting the chaos rather than order in Moscow.
- Prigozhin called off the rebellion but left several unresolved issues that could continue to trouble the Kremlin.
- The crisis began with Prigozhin accusing the defense leadership of ordering strikes on Wagner and seizing control of Russia's Southern Military District headquarters in Rostov-on-Don.
- Wagner forces embarked on a "march of justice" towards Moscow, damaging roads and bridges and shooting down helicopters and a command center plane, resulting in casualties.
- The convoy was eventually halted and turned back by the Belarus government, with Prigozhin confirming the end of the mutiny in a video statement.

What is the Wagner Group?

- The Wagner Group, also known as PMC Wagner, is a Russian paramilitary organization and private military company (PMC).
- It was founded in 2014 by Dmitry Utkin, a former GRU officer, and Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin.
- The Wagner Group operates beyond the law in Russia, where private military companies are officially prohibited.
- It has been described as a de facto private army of Yevgeny Prigozhin and is believed to have close ties to the Russian Ministry of Defence (MoD) and military intelligence agency, the GRU.
- Wagner has been involved in conflicts around the world, including the Donbas War in Ukraine, as well as in Syria, Libya, the Central African Republic, and Mali.
- The group has been accused of committing war crimes, including murder, torture, rape, and robbery of civilians, as well as torturing accused deserters.
- Wagner played a significant role in the Russian invasion of Ukraine and recruited prison inmates for frontline combat.
- Its strength has grown significantly, with estimates ranging from 20,000 to 50,000 contractors by the end of 2022.
- In 2023, Wagner contractors who participated in the invasion were granted combat veteran status by Russia.

Other such Mercenary Fighter Groups around the world

- **G4S:** operating in Iraq
- **Unity Resources Group:** operating in Middle East, Africa, Americas and Asia
- **Erinys:** guard Iraq's oil assets
- **Asia Security Group:** Afghanistan
- **DynCorp:** Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America
- **Triple Canopy:** operating in Iraq
- **Aegis Defence Services:** works with UN, US and Oil Companies

Face to Face Centres



27 June, 2023

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

AN Jha Deer Park



Context: Recently, the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) has cancelled the recognition of Deer Park in Hauz Khas, Delhi, as a 'mini zoo' and ordered its closure due to overcrowding.

AN Jha Deer Park:

Deer Park, also known as Aditya Nath Jha Deer Park, is a natural park. It is named after the renowned social worker, Aditya Nath Jha. It consists of various sections, including the Duck Park, Picnic Spots, and Rabbit Enclosures, offering a diverse experience for visitors.

Flora and Fauna:

The Deer Park is home to various species of flora and fauna including deer, rabbits and ducks. It provides a natural habitat for these animals amidst the urban surroundings, making it a significant green space in the city.

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA): Role and Purpose:

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) is a statutory body established under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in India. It serves as the apex regulatory authority for the management and oversight of zoos in the country.

Regulatory Authority:

CZA is responsible for the recognition, inspection, and regulation of zoos in India. It sets standards and guidelines for the housing, maintenance, and welfare of animals in zoos.

Recognition and Licensing:

CZA grants recognition to zoos that meet the prescribed criteria and standards. Zoos need to obtain recognition from CZA to operate legally in India and must fulfill ongoing requirements to maintain their recognition status.

NANDI Portal



Context: Recently, the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying has launched the NANDI (NOC Approval for New Drug and Inoculation System) Portal to facilitate the regulatory approval process for veterinary products in India.

NANDI Portal:

The NANDI (NOC Approval for New Drug and Inoculation System) portal represents a significant step in digitizing and streamlining the regulatory processes for veterinary products in India. It will contribute to the well-being of livestock, facilitate the availability of veterinary drugs and vaccines and promote the growth of the livestock industry.

Objective:

The NANDI portal, developed in coordination with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), aims to expedite the regulatory process by enabling quick and

Face to Face Centres



27 June, 2023

	easy coordination between government departments, institutes and the industry. It leverages IT systems to ensure minimum government intervention and maximum governance. Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI): The launch of NANDI is a part of the Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI) of the DAHD. It signifies the ministry's commitment to implement interventions that enhance animal health and strengthen the livestock sector.
Lithium Ion Battery 	Context: Recently, John B. Goodenough, a renowned scientist, passed away at the age of 100. He was one of the recipients of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his significant role in the development of the revolutionary lithium-ion battery. What is a Lithium-Ion Battery? ➤ A lithium-ion battery is a type of rechargeable battery that uses lithium ions as the primary carrier of electric charge. ➤ It consists of one or more electrochemical cells and is widely utilized as a power source for portable electronics, such as smartphones, laptops, tablets and electric vehicles. Composition: ➤ A lithium-ion battery typically comprises several key components including a cathode (positive electrode), an anode (negative electrode), a separator and an electrolyte. Applications: Lithium-ion batteries are extensively used in various applications, including: Portable electronics, Electric vehicles (EVs), Energy storage systems and Medical devices). Difference between Lithium-Ion Battery and Lithium Polymer Battery: ➤ Lithium-ion batteries usually have a liquid electrolyte, whereas lithium polymer batteries use a solid or gel-like polymer electrolyte. ➤ This distinction allows for different form factors and flexibility in shaping the battery. ➤ Lithium polymer batteries are often thinner and lighter, making them suitable for devices with space limitations. ➤ However, lithium-ion batteries are more commonly used in most consumer electronics and electric vehicles due to their higher energy density and established manufacturing processes.
Places in News Belgium	Context: India and Belgium have recently signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty that enables Belgian authorities to carry out search warrants issued by Indian courts and summon suspects.

Face to Face Centres



27 June, 2023

Geographical Location:

Belgium is a federal state situated in Western Europe. It is positioned along the North Sea and shares borders with France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The country is divided into three distinct regions: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels.



Capital and Major Cities:

The capital city of Belgium is Brussels, which is also the administrative center of the European Union. Other major cities include Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi, and Liège.

Language and Cultural Diversity:

Belgium is known for its linguistic and cultural diversity. The country has three official languages: Dutch (Flemish), French and German. Dutch is primarily spoken in the northern region of Flanders, French in the southern region of Wallonia and German in a small area along the eastern border.

Economic Importance:

Belgium has a highly developed economy and is known for its advanced industries including manufacturing, technology and services. It is a member of the Eurozone and the World Trade Organization.

International Organizations:

Apart from hosting various European Union institutions, Belgium is the headquarters of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and several international organizations and think tanks.

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