World Sight Day

Context: World Sight Day observed annually on the second Thursday of October is a global event meant to draw attention to blindness and vision impairment.

- World Sight Day is on October 12, with the theme "LOVE YOUR EYES AT WORK."
- The focus is on emphasizing the importance of protecting vision in the workplace.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in India is leading efforts to raise awareness about visual impairment.
- Business leaders are encouraged to prioritize the eye health of workers.
- The day was first observed by the SightFirst campaign of the Lions Club International organisation in the year 2000.

Projections and Problem

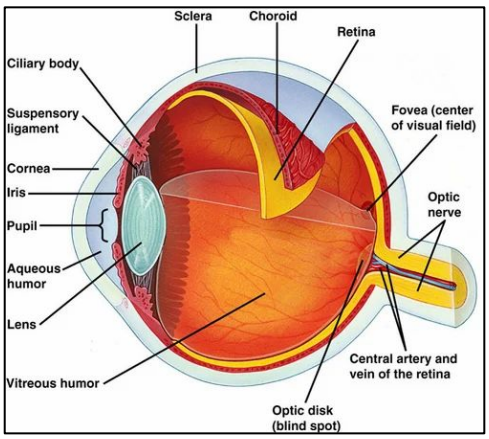
- Globally, 1.1 billion people have vision problems.
- Nearly everyone will need eye care services at some point.
- Distance vision issues affect 600 million people of which 43 million are blind.
- 510 million people have trouble seeing things up close.
- 90 million children and adolescents have vision problems.
- By 2050, 1.1 billion to 1.7 billion people may have vision issues.

Visual Impairment in India

- Prevalence of blindness was 1.99%, severe visual impairment (SVI) 1.96%, moderate visual impairment (MVI) 9.81%, extreme visual impairment (EVI) 12.92%, moderate-severe visual impairment (MSVI) 11.77%, and visual impairment (VI) 13.76%.
- Bijnor district (Uttar Pradesh) had the highest prevalence of blindness and visual impairment.
- Illiterate individuals had a higher rate of blindness compared to literate ones.
- Cataracts were the main cause of blindness (66.2%), SVI (80.7%), and MVI (70.2%).
- Other significant causes of blindness included corneal opacity (7.4%), cataract surgery complications (7.2%), and glaucoma (5.5%).
- Most of the blindness and visual impairment were due to avoidable causes (92.9% and 96.2% respectively).
- Barriers to accessing cataract surgical services included local reasons (25.5%), financial constraints (22.1%), and the fear of surgery (16.1%).
- Most important causes of visual impairment were refractive errors (29.6%) and untreated cataracts (25.4%).
- In the overall population, the estimated prevalence of blindness was 0.36%, severe visual impairment was 0.35%, moderate visual impairment was 1.84%, and early visual impairment was 2.92%.
- India successfully achieved the WHO target of a 25% reduction in visual impairment.

Defects in Human Eye

- **Myopia (Near-Sightedness):**
  - Can see nearby objects but not distant ones.
  - Distant objects appear blurry.
  - Caused by the eye's shape, which focuses light in front of the retina.
  - Corrected with a concave lens.
- **Hypermetropia (Far-Sightedness):**
  - Can see distant objects but not nearby ones.
  - May squint to see nearby objects.
  - Light from nearby objects focuses behind the retina.
  - Corrected with a convex lens.
- **Presbyopia:**
  - Gradual loss of ability to focus on nearby objects.
  - Typically starts around age 40 and worsens until about 65.
  - Corrected with bifocal lenses containing both convex and concave lenses.
- **Cataract:**
  - Eye lens becomes cloudy, causing blurred vision.
  - Treated with surgery.
  - Cloudiness results from the formation of a membrane over the lens.



Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

Context: Ahead of Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh, the Baiga Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) became the second to get habitat rights in the state, after the Kamar PVTG.

- 19 Baiga villages, with a total population of 6,483 people belonging to 2,085 families, have been granted habitat rights.
- The habitat rights were awarded in a special event organized by the district administration of Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi (GPM).
- The Baiga community primarily resides in various districts of Chhattisgarh, including Rajnandgaon, Kawardha, Mungeli, GPM, Manendra-Bharatpur-Chirmiri, and Bilaspur.
- This community also inhabits neighboring districts in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

Habitat Rights

- Habitat rights grant indigenous communities various rights, including socio-cultural practices, livelihood, ecological knowledge, and heritage preservation.
- These rights help preserve traditional livelihoods and ecological wisdom passed through generations.
- They enable coordination of government initiatives to empower Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG).
- Habitat rights are granted under Section 3(1)(e) of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.
- The FRA defines "habitat" as customary living areas of PVTGs and other forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes.
- These rights are crucial for protecting indigenous heritage and promoting sustainable living.
- While these rights aren't private ownership titles, they require the consent and consultation of the gram sabha for development.
- Forest Rights enjoy legal protection under various laws, including the Forest Conservation Act, Land Acquisition law of 2013, and the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act.
- Granting habitat rights adds an extra layer of legal protection to preserve indigenous territories.
- This protection ensures that PVTGs can maintain their socio-cultural practices, livelihoods, and traditional knowledge.

PVTGs

- Tribal communities are recognized by unique characteristics like primitive traits, cultural distinctiveness, geographic isolation, shyness towards outsiders, and underdevelopment.
- Some tribes display additional traits, including reliance on hunting and gathering, pre-agricultural technology, stagnant or declining population, and low literacy. These are categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- The Government of India employs specific criteria to identify PVTGs, including pre-agricultural technology, low literacy rates, economic underdevelopment, and stagnant or declining population.
- In India, tribal population comprises 8.6% of the total population.
- PVTGs (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups) are the most vulnerable among tribal communities.
- Developed tribal groups receive a significant share of tribal development funds, leaving PVTGs in greater need of focused funding.
- In 1973, the Dhebar Commission created the category of Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs), later renamed as PVTGs in 2006.
- In 1975, the Government of India identified and declared 52 PVTGs; in 1993, an additional 23 groups were added, totaling 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes.
- PVTGs share common characteristics like homogeneity, small population, physical isolation, lack of a written language, simple technology, and slower societal change.
- The majority of the 75 PVTGs are concentrated in Odisha.

Global Girlhood Report 2023

Context: Global Girlhood Report was released by Save the Children International on the International Day for Girl Child on 11th October.

Key Findings

- **Climate-Related Child Marriage Risk:**
  - Nearly 9 million girls worldwide face an increased risk of child marriage due to climate disasters, as per a report by Save the Children.
  - Approximately two-thirds of child marriages occur in regions with higher-than-average climate risks, as revealed in the Global Girlhood Report 2023.
  - The number of girls at high risk of extreme weather events and child marriage is expected to rise in the future.
- **Top 10 Hotspot Countries:**
  - Currently, about 29.9 million girls live in the top 10 countries identified as child-marriage and climate hotspots.
  - These countries are the Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, and South Sudan.
  - By 2030, this number is estimated to increase by 2.3 million to 32.2 million, and by 2050, it is projected to reach 39.9 million, marking a one-third increase.
- **Regional Impact:**
  - South Asia (Bangladesh) and sub-Saharan Africa (Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea) are the most severely impacted regions by child marriage and the climate crisis.
  - These areas also face poverty, gender inequality, conflict, and hunger.
- **Impact of Climate on Child Marriage:**
  - Historical data analysis shows that a 10% increase or decrease in rainfall is associated with a corresponding change in child marriage rates globally.
  - In drought-affected parts of Ethiopia, child marriage rates rose by 119% in 2022 compared to 2021.
  - Extreme heat in Bangladesh led to girls aged 11-14 being twice as likely to marry in the years following such events.
  - Severe flooding in Niger in 2022 affected over 2.6 million students and disproportionately increased the risk of child marriage, especially for girls.
  - After Cyclone Freddy, Malawi saw a surge in child marriages in the first half of 2023.

- **Urgent Need for Action:**
  - Girls affected by child marriage and climate impacts are less likely to complete their education, face a higher risk of violence, and experience greater health risks during pregnancy and childbirth.
  - Less than 2% of national climate plans worldwide specifically mention girls and consider their needs.
- **Proposed Solutions:**
  - The report emphasizes the urgent need to address the climate crisis as a girls' rights emergency.
  - Three ways to respond to the specific impacts of the climate crisis on girls and work towards gender equality as climate action include:
  - Making gender equality and protection from gender-based violence central priorities in climate action.
  - Investment in anticipatory action to shock-proof the systems and services girls need.
  - Supporting girls as decision-makers and autonomous feminist movements.
  - The report calls for investment in climate change adaptation, particularly focusing on highly vulnerable children, especially girls.

International Day for Girl Child

- International Day of the Girl Child in 2023 has the theme "Invest in Girls' Rights: Our Leadership, Our Well-being."
- The International Day of the Girl Child is an annual observance on October 11th, established by the United Nations (UN) and first celebrated in 2012.
- On December 19, 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution designating October 11th as the International Day of the Girl Child.
- This day is dedicated to promoting awareness of gender equality, advocating for the rights of girls, and enhancing opportunities for their well-being.
- The Ministry of Women & Child Development celebrated the National Girl Child Day on 24th January ,2023.
- Theme for National Girl Child Day 2023 was “Digital Generation, Our Generation”

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Chilika Lake

Recently, migratory birds have commenced their annual migration towards Chilika Lake.

About Chilika Lake:

- Chilika Lake is the **largest brackish** water lake in India and serves as a prominent wintering ground for **migratory birds** in the Indian subcontinent.
- It is **Asia's largest lagoon** and the **world's second-largest**.
- In **1981**, Chilika Lake was designated as the **first Indian wetland** of international importance under the **Ramsar Convention**, highlighting its ecological significance.
- One of the major attractions at Chilika is the presence of **Irrawaddy dolphins**, which are frequently sighted around Satapada Island.
- The extensive **Nalabana Island** was declared a bird sanctuary in **1987**, providing a vital habitat for migratory birds.

Migratory Birds:

Chilika Lake hosts a diverse range of migratory birds that travel thousands of miles from various regions, including the **Caspian Sea**, **Lake Baikal**, **Aral Sea**, **Russia**, **Mongolia**, **Central** and **Southeast Asia**, **Ladakh** and the Himalayas.

Baiga Tribe

Recently, the Baiga tribe in Chhattisgarh was granted habitat rights.

About the Baiga Tribe:

- The Baiga Tribe is a Particularly **Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).**
- They inhabit regions across **Chhattisgarh**, **Jharkhand**, **Bihar**, **Odisha**, **West Bengal**, **Madhya Pradesh** and Uttar Pradesh.
- They led semi-nomadic lifestyles and **practiced slash-and-burn cultivation**.
- They engage in a form of shifting cultivation known as "**Bewar**."
- Mahua, derived from the **fermentation** and **distillation** of **Mahua tree flowers**, holds importance in **Baiga food** and **drink culture**.
- **Tattooing** is an integral part of Baiga culture, with specific tattoos designated for different ages and body parts.

Legal Framework:

Habitat rights are granted **under Section 3(1) (e)** of the **Scheduled Tribes** and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (**Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006**, commonly referred to as the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

Horseshoe Crab

Recently, Laurent Ballesta won the grand prize and WPY Portfolio Award with his horseshoe crab photograph.

About Horseshoe Crab:

- The horseshoe crab is an **ancient marine arthropod** with a history spanning over **450 million** years, predating dinosaurs.
- This creature has a **hard exoskeleton**, a long, **pointed tail spine** and a **horseshoe-shaped carapace** that covers its body.
- It is primarily found along the **Atlantic coast of North America**, including the **Gulf** of **Mexico** and the southern coasts of the **United States**.
- Its blue-colored blood contains **Limulus amebocyte lysate** (LAL), an incredibly sensitive substance **used in medical testing** to detect **bacterial contamination** in **vaccines** and medical equipment.

	➢ It also plays a role in maintaining the health of coastal ecosystems, as its **eggs** provide a **critical food source for migratory shorebirds** during their long-distance migrations. ➢ It receives protection in a marine reserve around **Pangatalan** Island. **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable
UN Human Rights Council	**Recently, Russia's bid to rejoin the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was unsuccessful.** **About UN Human Rights Council:** ➢ The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an **intergovernmental body** established in **2006**, responsible for the **promotion** and **protection** of **human rights** worldwide. ➢ It consists of **47 Member** States. ➢ These members are **elected by the UN General Assembly** through a direct and secret ballot. ➢ Members serve on the UNHRC for a period of **three years.** ➢ Members are not eligible for immediate **re-election** after serving **two consecutive terms.** ➢ In a recent election, **15** new countries were elected to serve on the UNHRC, including **Albania**, **Brazil**, **China**, **France** and **Japan**.
Vizhinjam Port	**Recently, a Chinese crew was denied permission to disembark at the Vizhinjam port.** **About Vizhinjam Port:** ➢ Vizhinjam Port is a significant infrastructure project in **Kerala**, with a budget of Rs **7,525 crore.** ➢ It is being constructed under a **Public Private Partnership (PPP**) model with **Adani Ports Private Limited**. ➢ The project, initiated in December **2015**, has experienced delays in meeting its completion deadline. ➢ Upon completion, the port will have **30 berths** and the capacity to handle large "**megamax**" **container ships**. ➢ It is expected to compete with ports in **Colombo**, **Singapore** and **Dubai** for a share of trans-shipment traffic.
Surgical Site Infection	**About Surgical Site Infection:** ➢ Surgical Site Infection (SSI) is a **common complication** following surgical procedures, characterized by **infections** occurring at the surgical site in the body. ➢ It can range from **superficial skin** infections to **deeper infections** involving tissues. ➢ Approximately **11%** of patients undergoing surgery worl dwide develop surgical site infections, according to a **2018 WHO** report. ➢ The study focused on patients who underwent abdominal surgeries in 13 hospitals across four countries: **India**, **Mexico**, **Nigeria** and **Ghana**. ➢ The surgeries were categorized as **clean-contaminated** or **contaminated-dirty**, indicating the extent of the infection risk.
Place in News **Gaza Strip**	**Location:** Gaza Strip is situated on the **eastern coast** of the **Mediterranean** Sea. **Political Boundaries:** Gaza Strip is bordered by **Israel** to the **north** and **east** and **Egypt** to the **south**. **Historical Background:** ➢ After Israel declared its statehood in **1948**, the Gaza Strip was controlled by **Egypt** for nearly two decades. ➢ In **1967**, Israel gained control of Gaza during the **Six-Day War**. ➢ In **2005**, Israel withdrew around **9,000** Israeli settlers and its military forces from the Gaza Strip, leaving it to be governed by the internationally recognized **Palestinian Authority**. **Current Governance:** The Gaza Strip is currently governed by Hamas, a Palestinian Islamist organization that took control in **2007** after winning elections. Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist. **Blockade:** Israel has imposed a **land**, **air** and **sea blockade** on Gaza since **2007**.

POINTS TO PONDER

- **What astronomical body, where 5 ml of material is expected to weigh 5 billion tonnes and is thought to have a billion instances in the Milky Way, is being referred to? -** Black Hole
- **Which state in India has recently allowed the resumption of two cough syrups (Ambronol and DOK-1 Max) production at a Marion Biotech factory? -** Uttar Pradesh
- **Since 2006, Palestinians have been fractured by internal conflict between which two parties or groups? -** Fatah and Hamas
- **Who is the author of "The Kingdom of God is Within You" stimulated Gandhi's search for truth and non-violence? -**Tolstoy
- **What is the name of the newly discovered species of bagworm moth? -** Eumasia venefica