



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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PM'S VISIT TO UAE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "PM's Visit to UAE". The topic "PM's Visit to UAE" has relevance in the "International Relations" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

India UAE Groupings, Trade and UAE in map

For Mains:

GS2: Bilateral Relations, Agreements affecting India's interests

Why in the news?

The Prime Minister's recent visit to the United Arab Emirates marked his fifth visit to the country within the past eight years.

Highlights of the visit

The outcomes of the visit include the signing of several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and discussions on various topics such as the energy sector, climate change, the Indian diaspora, etc.

- **Both countries signed MoUs:**
 - To establish a framework that will promote the use of local currencies (INR-AED) for cross-border transactions.
 - On interlinking payment and messaging systems, also signed by the Governors of the respective Central Banks.
 - For the planning of establishing the Indian Institute of Technology - Delhi in Abu Dhabi.
- **Energy security:**
 - The two countries will continue their collaboration in the areas of green hydrogen, solar energy, and grid connectivity.
 - The two sides also agreed to increase investment in the energy sector, including India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve Programme.
- **Climate Change:**
 - The leaders commended the joint efforts on climate change, especially during India's presidency of the G20 and the UAE's presidency of COP28.
 - They agreed to cooperate to ensure that COP28 is a success for all.
- **Indian Diaspora:**
 - The UAE expressed gratitude to the large Indian diaspora for their continued significant contribution to the UAE's society and economy, which has further strengthened bilateral relations.
- **Bilateral Trade:**
 - The two leaders praised the economic partnership, which is currently worth USD 85 billion, and expressed hope that it would reach USD 100 billion in trade before the G20 meeting in Delhi this year.



The two leaders of both countries reiterated their dedication to further strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, exploring new areas of cooperation, and promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond.

Local Currency Settlement System (LCSS)

- One of the significant achievements of the visit was the signing of an MoU between India and the UAE to establish a framework for promoting the use of local currencies, specifically the Indian Rupee (INR) and the UAE Dirham (AED), for cross-border transactions.
- It encompasses all current account transactions and approved capital account transactions.
- The implementation of the LCSS would enable exporters and importers to invoice and make payments in their respective domestic currencies.
- This development would facilitate the growth of an INR-AED foreign exchange market.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) emphasized that this arrangement would also stimulate investments and remittances between the two countries.
- Moreover, utilizing local currencies would enhance transaction cost efficiency and reduce settlement time for various transactions, including remittances from Indian residents in the UAE.

India UAE Bilateral Relations

- India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) established formal ties in 1972.
- The bilateral ties were upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2017 during the visit of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ), then Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and now the President of the UAE.

Plurilateral Cooperation

- India and the UAE are currently participating in several multilateral platforms, such as I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) and UFI (UAE-France-India) Trilateral.
- I2U2 is a new grouping of India, Israel, the United States, and the United Arab Emirates.
 - The group was formed in 2021 with the aim of promoting economic cooperation and investment in six key areas: water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.
 - The first I2U2 summit was held in July 2022, and the group has since announced several joint initiatives, including a food security project and a hybrid renewable energy facility.
- UFI is a trilateral cooperation initiative between the United Arab Emirates, France, and India. It was established in February 2023 with the goal of promoting cooperation in the fields of energy, climate change, and the circular economy. The first UFI summit was held in Paris in March 2023.

Trade Relations:

- India-UAE trade reached USD 85 billion in 2022.

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) became India's third-largest trading partner and second-largest export destination for the year 2022-23. Conversely, India is the UAE's second-largest trading partner.
- Bilateral trade has increased by approximately 15% since the implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed in March 2022.

NRI Remittances:

- The Indian community in the UAE, estimated to be around 3.3 million, made annual remittances exceeding US \$17.06 billion in 2019.

Energy Security:

- The UAE has proven to be a reliable and resilient energy exporter as India's industrial and manufacturing capacity expands.
- In 2018, the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL) and the UAE's Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) signed an agreement ensuring stable pricing and oil supply.

Technology Partnerships:

- India and the UAE have established digital innovation and technology partnerships.
- Collaborative plans between ISRO and UAESA include missions like the Red Moon mission.

Residency Permits and Collaboration:

- The UAE offers "golden visa" residency permits to professionals such as doctors, engineers, PhD scholars, and specialists in high-end technology fields like AI, Big Data, virology, and epidemiology.

India and UAE have strengthened ties in recent years due to shared economic visions and aligned geopolitical outlooks. Economic engagement, diaspora relations, and strategic convergences have deepened, and the CEPA and the new MoUs will further strengthen ties.

Sources:

India, UAE to start trade settlement in local currencies, says PM Modi in Abu Dhabi

Q1. With reference to India UAE relations, consider the following statements:

1. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) became India's third-largest trading partner
2. UAE is the second-largest export destination for the India
3. India and UAE have signed the Free Trade Agreement recently in 2022.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None

Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following countries:

1. Oman
2. Yemen
3. Iraq
4. Saudi Arabia
5. Qatar

How many of the abovementioned are neighboring countries of the United Arab Emirates?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) Only Four

Answer: (b)

Q3. Analyze the key factors contributing to the growing economic partnership between India and the UAE, highlighting the sectors of collaboration and potential areas for further expansion.

Gaurav Nikumbh

UNAIDS REPORT

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "UNAIDS Report". The topic "UNAIDS Report" has relevance in the Public Health section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About AIDS Disease?

For Mains:

GS 2: Public Health

India's Initiatives to Curb AIDS Disease?

Key Highlights of the UNAIDS Report?

Why in the news?

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) claimed a life every minute in 2022, according to a new report by UNAIDS.

About AIDS Disease:

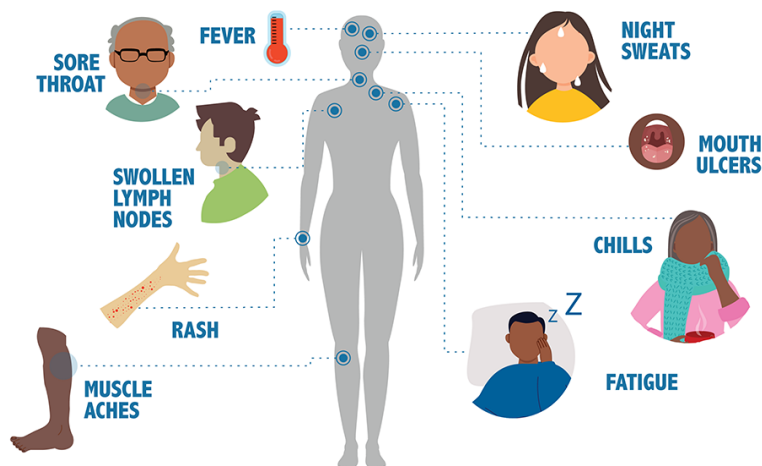
- AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is a chronic and potentially life-threatening health condition caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
- HIV primarily targets CD4, a type of white blood cell (T cells), in the body's immune system.
- T cells play a crucial role in detecting anomalies and infections in the body.
- Once HIV enters the body, it multiplies and destroys CD4 cells, leading to severe damage to the immune system. Once infected, the virus remains in the body permanently.
- The CD4 count of an HIV-infected person significantly reduces. In a healthy body, the CD4 count is between 500-1600, but in an infected body, it can drop as low as 200.

Transmission:

- HIV spreads through contact with certain body fluids, such as blood and semen, from an infected person.
- Transmission routes include unprotected sex, sharing contaminated needles, and mother-to-child transmission during childbirth or breastfeeding.

Symptoms:

- Initial symptoms of HIV infection include fatigue, fever, and sores.
- Over time, if HIV is not treated, it can progress to AIDS, leading to severe symptoms like pneumonia and certain cancers.



Prevention:

- Precautions can be taken to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
- Early diagnosis and treatment are crucial to managing the disease effectively.
- Pre-marital testing, including an HIV test, can ensure overall safety.
- Protective techniques should be used to prevent transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

India's Initiatives to Curb AIDS Disease:

- HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017:
- The Act mandates both central and state governments to take measures to prevent the spread of HIV or AIDS.

Access to ART:

- India has made Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) affordable and accessible to over 90% of people living with HIV in the world.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):

- In 2019, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare signed a MoU with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to enhance HIV/AIDS outreach.
- The MoU aims to reduce the incidence of social stigma and discrimination against victims of drug abuse, children, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Project Sunrise:

- Launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Project Sunrise aims to tackle the rising HIV prevalence in north-eastern states of India, particularly among people injecting drugs.

Key Highlights of the UNAIDS Report:

AIDS-Related Deaths and Access to Treatment:

- AIDS claimed a life every minute in 2022.
- Approximately 9.2 million people living with HIV worldwide lacked access to treatment in 2022.
- Out of the 2.1 million people receiving treatment, many were not virally suppressed.

Treatment Progress and Global Targets:

- 29.8 million out of 39 million people living with HIV globally are receiving life-saving treatment.
- Between 2020 and 2022, 1.6 million additional people received HIV treatment each year.

- The global target of 35 million people receiving HIV treatment by 2025 is within reach if the progress is sustained.

Slow Treatment Progress in Certain Regions:

- Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa exhibited slower treatment progress.
- Only around half of the over two million people living with HIV in these regions received antiretroviral therapy in 2022.

Gender Discrimination and Treatment Rates:

- Men living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia are less likely to receive treatment compared to women.
- Gender discrimination needs to be addressed to ensure equal access to treatment.

Impact on Children:

- AIDS-related deaths among children reduced by 64% from 2010 to 2022.
- However, approximately 84,000 children lost their lives to HIV in 2022.
- Around 43% of the 1.5 million children living with HIV did not receive treatment in 2022.

Challenges in HIV Prevention:

- Women and girls accounted for 63% of all new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Only about 42% of districts with high HIV incidence in the region have dedicated prevention programs.
- Enhanced prevention efforts are needed to address this gap.

Funding Gaps:

- HIV incidence has declined in regions with increased prevention funding.
- Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa face challenges in their HIV epidemics due to a lack of funding.
- In 2022, only USD 20.8 billion was available for HIV programs in low- and middle-income countries, falling short of the USD 29.3 billion required by 2025.

Fluctuating Funding Levels:

- In the early 2010s, funding substantially increased, but it has since fallen back to 2013 levels.
- In 2022, there was a 2.6% drop in funding compared to the previous year, with only USD 20.8 billion available for HIV programs in low- and middle-income countries.
- The funding gap remains significant, as the required amount by 2025 is USD 29.3 billion.

SOURCE:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/world/aids-claimed-1-life-every-minute-in-2022-9-2-million-patients-sans-hiv-treatment-unaid-90615>

Q.1 Which ministry in India launched Project Sunrise to address the rising HIV prevalence?

- (A) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- (B) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- (C) Ministry of Home Affairs
- (D) Ministry of Women and Child Development

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Which of the following statements is/are true according to the UNAIDS Report?

1. The global target of 35 million people receiving HIV treatment by 2025 is achievable based on current progress.
2. Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa exhibited significant progress in HIV treatment rates in 2022.
3. AIDS-related deaths among children reduced by 64% from 2010 to 2022.
4. The HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017, mandates state governments to take measures to prevent the spread of HIV.
5. India has made Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) accessible to over 90% of people living with HIV in the world.

Select the correct option(s):

- (A) 1, 2, and 3
- (B) 3, 4, and 5
- (C) 1 and 5
- (D) 2 and 4

ANSWER: C

Q.3 Discuss the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in India and the measures taken by the Indian government to combat the disease. How effective have these initiatives been in reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS on public health and society? Identify the challenges faced by India in its fight against HIV/AIDS and suggest potential strategies to overcome them.

Rishabh

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