

**NATIONAL**

**India continues to be polio free, all vaccines in Govt prog safe: WHO**

World Health Organisation and UNICEF have reiterated India's status as a polio free country. The statement comes in the wake of recent reports of polio virus "contamination" in polio vaccines in some parts of the country.

Certified polio-free in March 2014, India continues to remain vigilant against all three types of polioviruses. The last polio case due to wild poliovirus in the country was detected on 13 January 2011. Type 2 poliovirus containing vaccine has been phased out globally, and in India, in April 2016, as a part of the Polio End Game strategy. As elsewhere, bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) has replaced the trivalent OPV (tOPV) in all polio campaigns and routine immunization in India.

India was certified polio-free in March 2014 and it still continues to remain vigilant against all three types of polioviruses. The last polio case due to wild poliovirus in the country was detected on 13 January 2011. Recently, type 2 polio vaccine virus was found in some sewage and stool samples. It was from few vials of bOPV supplied by one manufacturer in India which were found to contain traces of Type 2 polio vaccine virus. After that Health Ministry had taken immediate and decisive action withdrawing vaccine supplied by this manufacturer from all states that it was supplied to.

As advised by the India Expert Advisory Group, India continues to conduct mass vaccination campaigns against polio, using bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV), to maintain high immunity against polio. Two nationwide campaigns and a sub-national campaign have already been conducted in 2018. As a part of efforts to maintain high immunity against all polioviruses, India provides inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) and bOPV to all infants across the country under routine immunization.

WHO said that in view of high routine immunization coverage in India under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), the risk of children getting vaccine derived poliovirus is minimal. All vaccines provided under the UIP are safe.

**Poliomyelitis**

- Poliomyelitis, often called polio or infantile paralysis, is an infectious disease caused by the poliovirus,, which mainly affects young children below age of 5. It is transmitted from person-to-person.
- Poliovirus is usually spread from person to person through infected fecal matter entering the mouth. It may also be spread by food or water containing human feces and less commonly from infected saliva.
- Poliomyelitis is caused by infection with a member of the genus Enterovirus known as poliovirus (PV). This group of RNA viruses colonize the gastrointestinal tract specifically the oropharynx and the intestine. The incubation time (to the first signs and symptoms) ranges from three to 35 days, with a more common span of six to 20 days. PV infects and causes disease in humans alone.

**Huge loss! Natural disasters cost India \$79.5 billion in economic losses in last 20 years: UN**

Right before International Day for Disaster Reduction, observed on October 13, United Nations compiled a report titled 'Economic Losses, Poverty and Disasters 1998-2017'. The report reveals the top ten countries who have suffered maximum monetary losses.

In 1998-2017 disaster-hit countries also reported direct economic losses valued at US\$ 2,908 billion (Nearly 3 trillion Dollar) , of which climate-related disasters caused US\$ 2,245 billion or 77 per cent of the total.

India has suffered economic losses of \$79.5 billion due to natural disasters during the last two decades, according to the United Nations (UN).

**Key takeaways from the report:**

- It states that the years between 1998 to 2017 have seen a dramatic rise of 151% in direct economic losses from climate-related disasters.
- In terms of the impact of disasters on the global economy between 1998 and 2017, affected countries reported direct losses of \$2.908 trillion, more than twice of what was lost in the previous two decades.
- Illustrating the growing threat from climate change, extreme weather events now account for 77% of total economic losses of \$2.245 trillion, said the report released on Wednesday.
- This represents a "dramatic rise" of 151% compared with losses reported between 1978 and 1997, which amounted to \$895 billion.
- The greatest economic losses have been experienced by the US at \$944.8 billion, followed by China at \$492.2 billion, Japan at \$376.3 billion, India at \$79.5 billion and Puerto Rico at \$71.7 billion.
- Storms, floods and earthquakes place three European countries in the top ten nations for economic losses: France, \$48.3 billion; Germany, \$57.9 billion and Italy \$56.6 billion. Thailand with \$52.4 billion and Mexico at \$46.5 billion complete the list.
- In terms of occurrences, climate-related disasters also dominate the picture, accounting for 91% of all 7,255 major recorded events between 1998 and 2017. Floods (43.4%) and storms (28.2%) are the two most frequently occurring disasters.
- During this period, 1.3 million people lost their lives and 4.4 billion people were injured, rendered homeless, displaced or in need of emergency assistance.
- 563 earthquakes, including related tsunamis, accounted for 56% of the total deaths or 747,234 lives lost, the report said.

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in the wake of the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia, it was clear that disasters have a steep human cost as millions of people are displaced every year, losing their homes and jobs because of extreme weather events and earthquakes.
- A better understanding of the economic losses from extreme weather events can help to generate greater action on climate change and increased ambition on reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. Measuring economic losses can also motivate Governments to do more to achieve the targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which seeks a substantial reduction in disaster losses by 2030.
- A key target of the global plan to reduce disaster losses, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, is to reduce economic losses from disasters and the report highlights the fact that 63% of disaster reports contain no economic data.
- The death and suffering caused by this month's earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia brings home the need to raise public awareness and to apply high standards for construction in seismic zones.
- The report's analysis makes it clear that economic losses from extreme weather events are unsustainable and a major brake on eradicating poverty in hazard exposed parts of the world.
- There was a need to do a much better job of capturing economic loss data if nations are to have a fuller understanding of what works when it comes to reducing economic losses, saving lives and livelihoods, and managing disaster risk.
- While high-income countries recorded losses for 53% of reported disasters between 1998 and 2017, low-income countries only recorded them for 13% of disasters.
- The report concludes that climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.
- It said disasters will continue to be major impediments to sustainable development so long as the economic incentives to build and develop hazard-prone locations outweigh the perceived disaster risks.
- Integrating disaster risk reduction into investment decisions is the most cost-effective way to reduce these risks; investing in disaster risk reduction is therefore a pre-condition for developing sustainable in a changing climate.

#### UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)

It was established in 1999 as dedicated secretariat to facilitate implementation of International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). It is an organisational unit of UN Secretariat and is led by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction (SRSG). It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

#### **National Policy on Electronics 2018**

- Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has issued draft 'National Policy on Electronics 2018' (NPE 2018) for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) Sector of India.
- It sets ambitious target of creating \$400 billion electronics manufacturing industry by 2025, with mobile phone devices segment accounting for three-fourths of production.
- The set target of \$400 billion turnover under it, includes targeted production of 1 billion mobile handsets by 2025, valued at \$190 billion (approximately Rs. 13 lakh crore) and also 600 million mobile handsets valued at \$110 billion (approximately Rs. 7 lakh crore) for export.
- It also aims to double the target of mobile phone production from 500 million units in 2019 to 1 billion by 2025 to meet objecti
- It also proposes to set up 20 **greenfield** and 3 **brownfield** electronic manufacturing cluster projects have been sanctioned with project outlay of Rs 3,898 crore, including Rs 1,577 crore from Central Government.
- It proposes suitable direct tax benefits, including inter-alia investment-linked deduction under Income Tax (IT) Act for electronics manufacturing sector, for setting up of new manufacturing unit or expansion of an existing unit. The proposal includes increasing tax benefits on expenditure incurred on R&D, enhancing rate of duty drawback for electronics sector, reimbursement of state levies and other levies for which input tax credit is not available, allowing duty free import of second-hand capital goods for electronics hardware manufacturing etc.

*Green-field and Brown-field investments are two different types of Foreign Direct Investment(FDI).Green-field investments occur when a parent company or government begins a new venture by constructing new facilities in a country outside of where the company is headquartered. Brown-field investments occur when an entity purchases an existing facility to begin new production.*

#### **A 'bioelectronic medicine' that speeds nerve repair**

Scientists have developed the first bioelectronic medicine — an implantable, biodegradable wireless device that speeds nerve regeneration and improves the healing of a damaged nerve.

Researchers at the Washington University in the US developed a device that delivers regular pulses of electricity to damaged peripheral nerves in rats after a surgical repair process, accelerating the regrowth of nerves in their legs and enhancing the ultimate recovery of muscle strength and control. The size of a dime and the thickness of a sheet of paper,the wireless device operates for about two weeks before naturally absorbing into the body, according to the study published in the journal Nature Medicine.

The technology, called "bioelectronic medicine," provides therapy and treatment over a clinically relevant period of time and directly at the site where it's needed, thereby reducing side-effects or risks associated with conventional, permanent implants.

While the device has not been tested in humans, the findings offer promise as a future therapeutic option for nerve injury patients

#### Advantages of Bioelectronic medicine

This biomedical technology provides therapy and treatment over clinically relevant period of time and directly at site where it is needed, thereby reducing side effects or risks associated with conventional, permanent implants. Moreover, these engineered systems provide active, therapeutic function in programmable, dosed format and then naturally disappear into body, without trace.

With this device, it has been shown that electrical stimulation given on scheduled basis during surgery can further enhance nerve recovery. No adverse biological effects from device and its reabsorption were found. Researchers envision that such transient engineered technologies one day can complement or replace pharmaceutical treatments for a variety of medical conditions in humans.

#### **India's first ever National Environment Survey to kick off in 24 states, 3 UTs in Jan, 2019**

India's first ever National Environment Survey (NES) will be kicked off in January, 2019 to map environment data of 55 districts across 24 states and 3 Union Territories. The NES will rank all districts on their environmental performance and document their best green practices based on various environmental parameters. The earliest first set of complete green data from this survey will be available in 2020.

It will be done through grid-based approach, using grids measuring 9×9 km to collect comprehensive data on various environmental parameters. These parameters will include air, water, soil quality; solid, hazardous and e-waste; emission inventory; forest & wildlife; flora & fauna; wetlands, lakes, rivers and other water bodies. It will also assess carbon sequestration potential of all the districts across the country.

The green data from this survey will provide important tool in hands of policy-makers for decision making at all levels – district, state and national. The survey will fully map and create emission inventory, provide valuation of ecosystem services and collate research in the field of environment. Initially the survey will be focusing on 55 districts and later will be scaled up to all districts in the country. The skilled manpower required for the survey will be provided from persons skilled and trained under MoEFCC's Green Skill Development Programme.

### **INTERNATIONAL**

#### **IPCC Special Report on Climate Change**

The Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C (SR15) was published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on 8 October 2018. The report, approved in Incheon, Republic of Korea, includes over 6,000 scientific references, and was prepared by 91 authors from 40 countries. It will be key scientific input in upcoming Katowice Climate Change Conference in Poland in December 2018.

*(IPCC is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. It was established in 1988 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO). It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Currently 195 countries are its members. It comprises a group of several hundred scientists of different nationality who assess climate change science. Every 5 or 6 years, IPCC comes out with comprehensive periodic reports on Climate Change called Assessment Reports (AR).)*

In December 2015, the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference called for the report. [The report was delivered at the United Nations' 48th session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to "deliver the authoritative, scientific guide for governments" to deal with climate change. Its broad findings are reported as being that drastic action must be taken in limited time to avoid severe and worsening consequences.

#### Main statements

1. Understanding global warming of 1.5 °C: This report says that global temperature will likely rise to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels by 2052 if warming continues at the current rate. Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have so far contributed 0.8 °C to 1.2 °C of warming. The gases which have already been emitted are unlikely to cause global temperature to rise to 1.5 °C alone, and a global temperature rise of 1.5 °C is avoidable depending on the rate of further emissions. Climate-related risks associated with increasing global warming depend on geographic location, "levels of development and vulnerability", and the speed and reach of climate mitigation and climate adaptation practices.
2. Projected climate change, potential impacts and associated risks: According to the report, with global warming of 1.5 °C there would be increased risks to "health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth.
3. Emission pathways and system transitions consistent with 1.5 °C global warming: The report indicates that "rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure..., and industrial systems", "unprecedented in terms of scale, but not necessarily in terms of speed" would require "deep emissions reductions in all sectors, a wide portfolio of mitigation options and a significant upscaling of investments in those options.

4. Strengthening the global response in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty: The report also states that, in order to avoid reliance on the use of largescale carbon dioxide removal (CDR) in the decades to come, globally, we need a decline in CO2 emissions "well before 2030."
- It clearly shows how half degree of warming makes big difference, adversely impacting global population and overall ecosystem through intense heat waves, melting of Arctic, sea level rise, erratic rainfall, reduction of farm yield and vanishing of living species.
- It is possible to meet new warming target, provided nations together take rapid and far reaching transitions over next 10 to 20 years in energy, industry, land use, buildings, transport and cities to cut emissions and reach net zero around 2050 — 25 years earlier than planned under earlier 2-degree goal.
- It lists four pathways to curb global warming and through which the 1.5 degree target can be achieved. In each of pathways, global average temperature is projected to overshoot 1.5 degrees Celsius target by some amount before returning to that level before the end of this century.
- Each of these pathways is also dependent on some amount of Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR), a reference to physical removal of stock of CO2 from atmosphere to reduce its concentrations. Varying amounts between 100 to 1000 gigatons (billion tonnes) of CO2 needs to be removed from atmosphere in these four pathways.
- It refers to climate models that project robust differences in regional climate characteristics between present-day and global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius and between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius. These differences include increase in mean temperatures in both land ocean regions, hot extremes in most inhabited regions, heavy precipitation in several regions and probability of drought and precipitation deficits in some regions.

*Advantages of keeping global temperature rise within 1.5 degrees celsius*

*It also lists several specific advantages of keeping the global temperature rise within 1.5 degrees celsius from pre-industrial levels. By 2100, global sea level rise would be 10 cm lower with global warming of 1.5 degrees compared with 2 degrees Celsius. Arctic Ocean free of sea ice in summer would be once per century with global warming of 1.5 degrees, compared with at least once per decade with 2 degrees Celsius. Coral reefs will decline by 70-90% with global warming of 1.5 degrees, whereas virtually all (over 99%) would be lost with 2 degrees Celsius. It also points out that climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius and increase further with 2 degrees Celsius.*

#### **Global Hunger Index 2018: India ranks 103rd out of 119 countries**

- As per the index, India was ranked 103rd out of 119 qualifying countries. The Global Hunger Index 2018 report was prepared jointly by global NGOs namely, Concern Worldwide (Ireland) and Welthungerhilfe (Germany). The 2018 scores reflect data from 2013-2017.
- Zimbabwe, Somalia, and CAR have the highest rates of undernourishment, ranging between 46.6 and 61.8 percent.
- Timor-Leste, Eritrea, and Burundi have the highest stunting rates with at least half of the children suffering from stunting in each country.
- Child Wasting is most prevalent in Djibouti (16.7 percent), India (21.0 percent), and South Sudan (28.6 percent).
- The highest under-five mortality rates are in Somalia (13.3 percent), Chad (12.7 percent), and CAR (12.4 percent).
- The six countries with alarming levels of hunger are Chad, Haiti, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Yemen, and Zambia.
- One country suffering from an extremely alarming level of hunger is the Central African Republic (CAR)

#### **Key facts and figures of Global Hunger Index 2018**

- In the countries included in the GHI, the share of the undernourished population stood at 12.3 percent in 2015-2017, down from 17.6 percent in 1999-2001.
- 27.9 percent children under five years of age were stunted based on data from 2013-2017, down from 37.1 percent in 1998-2002.
- 9.3 percent children under-5 years were wasted, slightly down from 9.7 percent in 1998-2002.
- The under-five mortality rate was 4.2 percent as of 2016, down from 8.1 percent in 2000.

#### **INDIA**

- Overall, India has been ranked at 103 out of 119 countries in the Index, with hunger levels in the country categorised as "serious". India's ranking has dropped three places from last year
- 21% Indian children are under-weight.
- The percentage of undernourished people in the population has dropped from 18.2% in 2000 to 14.8% in 2018. The child mortality rate has halved from 9.2% to 4.3%, while child stunting has dropped from 54.2% to 38.4% over the same period.
- However, the prevalence of child wasting has actually worsened in comparison to previous reference years. It stood at 17.1% in 2000, and increased to 20% in 2005. In 2018, it stands at 21%.

#### **Insufficient progress to reach Sustainable Development Goals**

Despite these improvements, the question remains whether the world will achieve United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which aims to end hunger, ensure food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030.



As per the index, the world is still far from a world without malnutrition. The index covers four indicators of stunting, wasting, severe wasting and overweight among children under 5, and reveal insufficient progress to reach the World Health Assembly targets for 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals set for 2030. Accelerated progress will be needed to achieve SDG targets in child survival.

GHI scores are calculated using a three-step process.

Firstly, values are determined for each country in four indicators- Undernourishment, Child Wasting, Child Stunting and Child Mortality.

Secondly, each of the four component indicators is given a standardised score on a 100-point scale based on the highest observed level for the indicator.

Thirdly, standardised scores are aggregated to calculate the GHI score for each country, with each of the three dimensions (inadequate food supply; child mortality; and child undernutrition)

#### **FACTS FOR PRELIM**

#### **Sendai Framework , 13 October: International Day for Disaster Reduction**

The theme of the 2018 International Day for Disaster Reduction was 'Reducing Disaster Economic Losses'.

The 2018 theme continues as part of the "Sendai Seven" campaign, centred on the seven targets of the Sendai Framework. This year focuses on Target C of the Sendai Framework, which is, 'reducing disaster economic losses in relation to global GDP by 2030'.

In 2016, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) launched the Sendai Seven campaign, which was centred on the seven targets of the Sendai Framework.

#### **Seven targets of Sendai Framework**

1. Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030
2. Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030
3. Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030
4. Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services by 2030
5. Substantially increase the number of countries with disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020
6. Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries by 2030
7. Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems by 2030

#### **Bangladesh enacts Digital Security Bill, 2018**

Bangladesh's President Abdul Hamid has given his assent to the controversial Digital Security Bill, 2018, by enacting it as a law. It was passed by Bangladesh's Parliament to deal with cybercrimes, including hurting religious sentiment, spreading negative propaganda against 1971 Liberation War and Bangabandhu (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman). It provides for minimum of 7 years and a maximum of 14 years' imprisonment, as well as monetary fines of a minimum of Taka 25 lakh and maximum of Taka 1 crore, or both for illegal access and destruction of any important information related to state affairs.

#### **Japanese Passport Named World's Most Powerful, India 81st**

Japan's passport has been named the most powerful in the world, overtaking Singapore, according to the Henley Passport Index. Having gained visa-free access to Myanmar earlier this month, Japanese citizens now have visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 190 destinations around the world. The Indian passport has secured the 81st rank with visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 60 destinations.

#### **Ukraine Launches Air Exercises Clear Sky 2018 With NATO Countries**

Ukraine has opened a series of large-scale air-force exercises with the United States and seven other NATO countries. The 12-day-long Clear Sky 2018 war games are being held in western Ukraine.

Ukraine Capital: Kiev , Currency: Ukrainian hryvnia

NATO HQ: Brussels, Belgium, Heads: Jens Stoltenberg Members: 29

#### **NSA Ajit Doval to head new Strategic Policy Group established to assist National Security Council**

Union Government has reconstituted Security Policy Group (SPG) under chairmanship of National Security Advisor to assist National Security Council (NSC) in strategising on matters dealing with external, internal and economic security of the country. It will be 16-member body chaired by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval. Its members will include NITI Aayog Vice Chairman, Cabinet Secretary, Chiefs of the three defence services, RBI governor, foreign secretary, home secretary, finance secretary and defence secretary.

#### **Crop damages in wild animal attacks put under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna on pilot basis**

- Union Government has decided to cover damages to crops in wild animal attacks under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna in select districts on an experimental basis.
- The government has also brought under the PMFBY ambit certain horticultural crops on an experimental basis.
- The minister said the amended provisions for the scheme also stipulate fines in cases of delay in clearing the insurance claims for crop damages.
- In case a firm now delays the clearances beyond two months, it will have to pay an annual interest of 12 per cent.
- Similarly the state government too will have to pay an interest of 12 per cent in case of delay in release of state's share of subsidy in premium to insurance firms.
- Insurances firms will also have to spend 0.5 per cent of their earnings from annual premium to advertise the provisions of the PMFBY among the peasants.

NOTE:- PMFBY is farmers' welfare scheme launched in 2016 to ensure faster insurance services or reliefs to farmers. Under PMFBY farmers need to pay uniform premium of only 2% for all Kharif crops and 1.5% for all Rabi crops. In case of annual commercial and horticultural crops, farmers have to pay premium of only 5%.

**Sushma Swaraj launches 'India for Humanity' initiative**

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj launched India for Humanity initiative in New Delhi as part of 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi being held over the next one year. With its focus on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of compassion, caring and service to humanity, 'India for Humanity' features a year-long series of artificial limb fitment camps in a number of countries spanning the globe.

The External Affairs Ministry is collaborating for this with charitable organization Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, BMVSS. The camps will be initially held in 12 countries identified through the Missions with financial support of Indian government.

BMVSS was founded in 1975 and better known by its trademark limb Jaipur Foot, BMVSS is among the world's largest organisations for the fitment of artificial limbs and till date has served over 1.73 million amputees.

**IBM India partners Niti Aayog to skill students in new-age tech**

Tech major IBM India and NITI Aayog announced an internship programme for the top performing under-18 students selected by the ATAL Innovation Mission, a flagship programme of the government to promote entrepreneurship and innovation. Over 40 high school students will go through a two-week paid internship at the IBM campus in Bengaluru.

**Women achievers meet at UN forum in Bengaluru**

Over a dozen women achievers from different walks of life participated in a day-long festival at a UN forum in Bengaluru. Created and curated by veteran journalist Barkha Dutta for 'We The Women' forum, the fest themed on #openingdoors and #breakingbarriers was marked by dialogues on issues such as the fight for women against the religious orthodoxy whether in ending Triple Talaq or demanding the right to enter Sabarimala.

**Haryana to set up anti-terror force**

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said an anti-terrorist force 'Kavach' — will be set up to further strengthen the security arrangements in the state. Kavach, which is being constituted to deal with terrorist activities, would have 150 police personnel who would be provided 14 weeks training by the National Security Guard (NSG) at Manesar. The headquarters of Kavach would be at Gurugram.

**Tushar Mehta appointed as new Solicitor General of India**

Union Cabinet has approved appointment Tushar Mehta as the new Solicitor General of India. He will replace Ranjit Kumar. Solicitor General is the second highest law officer in the country. He is subordinate to the Attorney General of India, the highest law officer and works under him. He also advises the government in legal matters. Solicitor general is appointed for period of three years by Appointment Committee of Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister.

**ESIC wins ISSA GOOD Practice Award, Asia and Pacific 2018**

Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) was awarded ISSA (International Social Security Association) ISSA Good Practice Award for Administrative Solution for Coverage Extension at Regional Social Security Forum for Asia and Pacific held at Kuala Lumpur, capital Malaysia.

NOTE-Employee's State Insurance (abbreviated as ESI) is a self-financing social security and health insurance scheme for Indian workers. This fund is managed by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) according to rules and regulations stipulated there in the ESI Act 1948.

At present, the ESIC covers around 3 crore formal sector employees in the country. ESIC draws plan to cover 10 crore formal sector workers by 2022. (Union Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar)

**World Post Day: October 9**

- The day is celebrated to mark anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874 in the Swiss Capital, Bern. The 2018 theme is: "Imagine you are a letter travelling through time. What message do you wish to convey to your readers?".
- World Post Day was instituted at Universal Postal Union (UPU) Congress held in Tokyo, Japan in 1969.
- Universal Postal Union (UPU)-Headquarters: Bern, Switzerland
- International telecommunication union-Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

**WEF launches Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution in India**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has announced its new Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution in India. The Centre will be based in Maharashtra. It will be fourth center in chain-ones as part of WEF's global network along with San Francisco (US), Tokyo (Japan) and Beijing (China) are already functioning. The centre will facilitate to bring together government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies. NITI Aayog will coordinate partnership on behalf of government and work of centre among multiple ministries.

**World Economic Forum (WEF)**

It is an international institution founded by Klaus Schwab that works to improve the state of the world through public-private cooperation. It was established in 1971 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

**ISRO and Central university of Jammu signed MoU for setting up of Space Science Centre**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Central University of Jammu (CUJ) in Jammu today for setting up of Satish Dhawan Center for Space Science in

University. The centre is named after Satish Dhawan, father of experimental fluid dynamics research in India and former Chairman of ISRO

**Ro-Ro service from Neamati to Manjuli Island in Assam**

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) in collaboration with Assam Government has launched new Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) facility connecting Neamati to Manjuli Island in Assam. The Ro-Ro facility will cut down circuitous road route of 423 km that trucks take from Neamati to Majuli Island via Tezpur Road Bridge. Majuli is world's largest riverine islands located on Brahmaputra River. IWAI is nodal statutory body in charge of development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation. It was established in October 1986 and is headquartered in Noida, UP.

**Ro-Ro Ferry Service:** It refers to vessels used to carry wheeled cargo like cars, semi-trailer trucks, trucks, trailers, and railroad cars that are driven on (rolled on) and off (rolled off) ferry on their own wheels or using platform vehicle.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Health ministry confirms 22 Zika cases in Rajasthan**

Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has confirmed 22 positive laboratory-confirmed cases of Zika virus in Rajasthan's capital Jaipur. It was detected through Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) surveillance system and all suspected cases in defined area and mosquito samples are being tested.

**All about Zika virus Disease**

Zika virus Disease is mosquito-borne virus transmitted by Aedes aegypti mosquitoes which also transmit three other vector-borne diseases Chikungunya, dengue and yellow fever. The virus belongs to family Flaviviridae and Genus Flavivirus. It was first identified in 1947 in Zika Forest, Uganda from where it derives its name. Now it is emerging disease currently being reported by 86 countries worldwide.

**Symptoms:** They are similar to other viral infections such as dengue, and include fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache.

**Threats:** Pregnant women infected with Zika virus may give birth to babies with severe brain damage or serious birth defects i.e. neurological disorders and foetal deformation known as Microcephaly in which infants are born with abnormally smaller heads. Besides there is also possible link between virus and Guillain-Barré syndrome (a condition in which the body's immune system attacks part of the nervous system) is also suspected.

**Treatment and Prevention:** There is no specific treatment or vaccine currently available to treat Zika. The best form of prevention is protection against mosquito bites and clearing stagnant water where mosquitoes breed.

**Areas affected with Zika:**

It was later identified in humans in 1952 in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Outbreaks of Zika virus disease have been recorded in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific.

From the 1960s to 1980s, human infections were found across Africa and Asia, typically accompanied by mild illness.

The first large outbreak of disease caused by Zika infection was reported from the Island of Yap (Federated States of Micronesia) in 2007.

In July 2015 Brazil reported an association between Zika virus infection and Guillain-Barré syndrome. In October 2015 Brazil reported an association between Zika virus infection and microcephaly.

First outbreak of Zika Virus was reported in Ahmedabad, Gujarat in January/February 2017 and second outbreak in July 2017 from Krishnagiri District in Tamilnadu.

**Steps taken by WHO**

The World Health Organization has recently declared the Zika virus and its suspected link to birth defects as an international public health emergency, a rare move that signals the seriousness of the outbreak and gives countries new tools to fight it.

WHO is working with countries to:

- Define and prioritize research into Zika virus disease by convening experts and partners.
  - Enhance surveillance of Zika virus and potential complications.
  - Strengthen capacity in risk communication to help countries meet their commitments under the International Health Regulations.
  - Provide training on clinical management, diagnosis and vector control including through a number of WHO Collaborating Centres.
  - Support health authorities to implement vector control strategies aimed at reducing Aedes mosquito populations such as providing larvicide to treat standing water sites that cannot be treated in other ways, such as cleaning, emptying, and covering them.
- Prepare recommendations for clinical care and follow-up of people with Zika virus, in collaboration with experts and other health agencies.



Response from Indian Government

- India's Health Ministry issued health advisory, appointing National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC); as the nodal agency for investigation of outbreak:
- The ministry issued a detailed press release stating that:
- The NCDC, Delhi and National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, would be the apex laboratories to support the outbreak investigation and for confirmation of laboratory diagnosis.
- Ten additional laboratories would be strengthened by ICMR to expand the scope of laboratory diagnosis.
- Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) shall be activated at Central and State surveillance units. Each team in the RRT would comprise an epidemiologist, public health specialist, microbiologist and a medical and paediatric specialist and other experts (entomologist etc) to travel at short notice to investigate suspected outbreak.
- Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) through its community and hospital based data gathering mechanism would track clustering of acute febrile illness and seek primary case, if any, among those who travelled to areas with ongoing transmission in the 2 weeks preceding the onset of illness.