

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

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1 – Measles:

GS II

Health related issues

- **Important information:**

- India now ranks in the top ten nations in the world for the proportion of children who did not receive their first vaccination.
- Of the 37 nations that experienced significant or disruptive outbreaks of measles, India reported 40,967 cases in 2022.
- During the pandemic, measles vaccination rates fell to their lowest points globally since 2008. This resulted in a 43% increase in deaths and an 18% increase in cases in 2022.
- Due to the pandemic, routine immunisation rates decreased in 2020 and 2021.
- The problem with measles is that, even if one cohort is not vaccinated, they still become highly susceptible to contracting the illness.
- The majority of the peri-urban regions and clusters where the outbreaks were later identified had vaccination gaps during the pandemic.
- The measles vaccine provides 97% lifetime protection after two doses.

- **Regarding the measles:**

- A virus is the source of the highly contagious disease measles.
- When an infected individual breathes, coughs, or sneezes, it can spread quickly.
- While measles can strike anyone, children are most commonly affected.
- After affecting the respiratory system, measles spreads to other parts of the body.

- **Signs:**

- an elevated temperature,
- cough
- runny nose in addition to
- a complete body rash.

- **Avoidance:**

- The best defence against contracting the measles or infecting others is vaccination.

- **Transfer:**

- One of the most contagious illnesses in the world, measles is transmitted by breathing in the air that has been inhaled by an infected person or by coming into touch with infected nasal or throat secretions (coughing or sneezing).

- **Therapy:**

- The measles has no particular therapy.
- Relieving symptoms, ensuring the patient is comfortable, and averting complications should be the main goals of care.

- India's measles outbreak:

- Among the diseases that can be prevented by vaccination, it is the main cause of childhood death in India.
- Aerosol droplets from infected individuals are the respiratory mechanism by which measles spreads.
- A sizable fraction of the global measles-related mortality rate is attributed to India.

- *Source* → *The Hindu*

2 - The Global South is invited by India to join the biofuel alliance:

GS III

Environmental Conservation related issues

- **Important information:**

- Declaring its willingness to share its knowledge with emerging and less developed countries, India extended an invitation the Global South to join the recently established Global Biofuels Alliance.
- At the recent Group of 20 leaders' meeting, a global alliance for the promotion of biofuels was established with the goal of lowering emissions in the transportation and industrial sectors.
- Leading producers Brazil and the US are part of the Global Biofuel Alliance, which aims to develop the global market for biofuel trade—a fuel derived from biomass.

- The third-largest energy consumer in the world was able to reduce emissions and give farmers an extra revenue stream by converting biomass into fuel.

- **The accomplishments of India:**

- India increased the percentage of biofuels blended into petrol from 1.4% in 2014 to 10% in May 2022.
- With a payment of USD 8.7 billion, it increased farmers' income while reducing carbon dioxide emissions by more than 40 million metric tonnes during the previous nine years.
- India now leads the world in the production of renewable energy, with non-fossil fuels accounting for 40% of installed electrical capacity.
- In addition, he noted that India has started a national green hydrogen mission with the goal of producing 5 million tonnes by 2030, positioning the country as a global centre for the production, use, and export of green hydrogen and its byproducts.
- India is currently the world's third-largest energy consumer.

- **Biofuels: what are they?**

- "Liquid fuels derived from biomass and used as an alternative to fossil fuel-based liquid transportation fuels such as petrol, diesel and aviation fuels," is how the International Energy Agency (IEA) describes biofuels.
- Biofuels are derived from plant, agricultural, or industrial waste.
- Corn, rice, and sugarcane are the main feedstocks utilised to make the fuel.

- **Can biofuels help with the energy transition?**

- Nowadays, the majority of biofuels are mixed to varied degrees with petrol or diesel.
- For example, India already mixes 10% of biofuels and wants to increase this to double in the upcoming years.
- Some contend that the ongoing energy transition should concentrate on developing alternatives like green hydrogen, since 2G ethanol would mitigate the imminent disruption.
- This would be accomplished by extending the lifespan of internal combustion engines, which would allow automakers to develop reliable alternatives, lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and creating jobs and higher wages for farmers.

- **Regarding the Alliance for Global Biofuels:**

- This alliance, which is led by India, was formed to promote the development and consumption of biofuels as a substitute for fossil fuels like diesel and petroleum.
- The Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) aims to unite nations in collaborative development, expedite technological advancements in production processes, and promote the utilisation of biofuels, specifically in the transportation sector.
- Leading producers from Brazil, the US, and India are included in the group.

- As it moves closer to its net-zero goal, expanding and developing markets for sustainable biofuels has been one of India's top focuses during the summit's hosting.
- As of right now, the alliance consists of 12 international organisations (such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and World Economic Forum) and 19 countries (such as Singapore, Argentina, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates).

- **The Global Biofuel Alliance's primary goals are:**

- With the main objective of increasing the use of biofuels, the Global Biofuel Alliance is establishing itself as a significant knowledge centre for biofuels.
- The alliance promotes responsible biofuel deployment by focusing on sustainability as a fundamental value and working to ensure that biofuels are accessible and affordable.
- The alliance must consider fuel source diversity in order to meet these goals.
- We will investigate other options to guarantee a sustainable and eco-friendly energy future, including biomass, algae, and other renewable energy sources.
- The alliance has also committed to using cutting-edge technologies and conservation strategies to increase the efficiency of currently available biofuels.
- This strategy is crucial for minimising the negative environmental effects of biofuel production while enhancing the financial sustainability of renewable energy sources.

- **Restrictions:**

- **Debate over food vs fuel:**

- One major issue with the Global Biofuel Alliance is the "food versus fuel" controversy.
- Because it depends on crops, the development of biofuel has the potential to take agricultural resources away from the production of food.
- These worries have grown as a result of the ongoing confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, which has already caused food shortages in some areas.
- Because rice is a scarce food crop, India has also barred its exports of the grain.
- Given that rice is a significant source of ethanol, the current food shortage may get worse due to the rising demand for biofuels.

- **Infrastructure requirements and environmental risks:**

- A number of variables, including the climate, the availability of land, and the competition from other agricultural demands, affect the availability of feedstock for the manufacture of biofuel.
- Converting arable land to cropland for the purpose of building the infrastructure required for biofuel production is expensive and could result in deforestation.
- An environmental risk arises from the increased usage of water resources for off-season agricultural growing in order to supply the demand for biofuel.

- **The next step:**
- Approximately 81% of the world's biofuels are used by the three founding members of the GBA, who generate 85% of it.
- In 2018, India declared its intention to establish 12 new refineries in order to achieve a 20% ethanol blend by 2025.
- With India's promise that it will achieve net zero emissions by 2070—that is, remove as much carbon from the atmosphere as human activity produces—this becomes even more important.
- Three developing economies—India, Brazil, and Indonesia—will account for around two thirds of the world's demand for biofuels.
- Their advantages include an abundance of domestic feedstocks, more production capacity, affordable production prices, and a set of policies they can use to drive up demand.
- It remains to be seen, though, if this would actually speed up the energy sector's decarbonisation.
- Rather than depending exclusively on feedstock generated from crops, it is necessary to investigate alternative sources for biofuel production, such as using waste products like animal and human waste.
- This strategy could help allay some worries about food security and the environment related to the production of biofuels.

• *Source → The Hindu*

3 – Agroland:

GS I

Indian Culture

- **Important information:**
- These pieces, according to reports, were formerly in Australia but have subsequently moved to the eastern region of Indonesia.
- Argoland was formerly a portion of a landmass that covered an area equivalent to that of the United States 155 million years ago.
- The adjacent Southeast Asian regions, which were formerly a part of Australia, are home to the recently discovered continent fragments.
- The chain known as "Argoland" was once a single, coherent landmass.
- Argoland's present location is depicted on a map, which shows that the pieces have mostly moved eastward in Indonesia, with some even making their way into Myanmar.

- Argoland had not so much disappeared as endured as a vastly spread and jumbled assemblage beneath the islands to the east of Indonesia.
- Argoland is also known as an archipelago because it is not a single, cohesive landmass but rather a collection of microcontinents.
- *Source → The Hindu*

4 - The reason behind the impasse in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor:

GS II

International Issues

- **Important information:**
- Pakistan is requesting \$65 billion in funding for infrastructure projects.
- In addition, Pakistan was making an effort to appease China in regards to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- Disagreements over the Gwadar port in Balochistan caused the infrastructure project, which Beijing had been leading since 2015, to come to a standstill.
- **What is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor?**
- One of the biggest projects made as part of One Belt, One Road (OBOR) is the CPEC.
- In 2015, it was formally introduced.
- The 3,000-kilometer-long China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) links Pakistan's western state of Balochistan with the northwest Chinese Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.
- The goal of this bilateral endeavour between China and Pakistan is to improve connectivity across the country by building a system of pipelines, railroads, and highways in addition to developing energy, industrial, and other infrastructure.
- It will make it possible for China to access the Indian Ocean as well as the Middle East and Africa via Gwadar Port.
- With the signing of more than 50 projects totaling \$45 billion, China established the "Silk Road Fund" to finance CPEC projects through 2030.
- The primary goal of the project was to build a corridor that would link China's Kashgar in the southwest Xinjiang province with Pakistan's Gwadar port in Balochistan.
- A group of Chinese institutions is funding the Silk Road Fund, which oversees the investment.
- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) calls for the development of many power projects and special economic zones in addition to this corridor.

- **Issue domain:**

- **There are numerous issues, including:**

- uncertainty over funding,
- choice of contractor,
- postponement of the bidding procedure,
- distinctions regarding tax exemptions, and
- obtaining certifications of no objection.

- **Port of Gwadar:**

- The first problem the Gwadar port had was with water supplies.
- The 11.2 billion rupee project, which involved connecting the Swad and Shadikaur dams to supply, treat, and distribute water to the port, was postponed.
- That was because the port authorities were unsure if the project was financed by a commercial loan from China, an interest-free loan, or a grant from China.

- **Issues pertaining to other projects:**

- Uncertainty about funding has caused problems for other projects, such as the 600 MW Gwadar coal-fired power plant and the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan.
- These projects are supported by commercial Chinese loans, which are guaranteed by the Pakistani government and covered against nonpayment by the China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation (Sinosure).
- Sinosure imposes finance fees, an annual variable interest rate, and a 7% debt servicing charge, making the project as a whole extremely costly for the already indebted country.
- Any benefits from the enhanced electricity generation will be offset by the high building expenses.

- **Fears among the natives:**

- **Loss of means of subsistence:**

- Rejecting the employment of unskilled Chinese labour in place of Pakistani labourers and fearing the loss of local livelihoods like fishing, the citizens of Pakistan have refused to sell land to the Chinese for the construction of the port.

- **Total profit made by China:**

- Beijing receives 91% of the income from the Gwadar port, which is leased to the China Overseas Ports Holding Company; Islamabad only receives 9% of the profits.
- Locals' anti-Chinese sentiment has increased as a result.

- **Land taking via force:**

- The government of Pakistan has resorted to taking villagers' land and forcing them to relocate.
- In Balochistan, this has caused the insurgency to increase.
- These terrorist organisations have attacked Pakistani Army personnel who are guarding Chinese labourers on multiple occasions.

- **China and Pakistan's rift:**

- Three road projects were no longer funded by China due to allegations of corruption:
 - The 81 billion rupees Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob Road spans 210 km.
 - the 110-kilometer, 19.7 billion rupee Khuzdar-Basima Road, and
 - the 8.5 billion rupee Karakoram Highway, a 136-kilometer stretch.
- The Gwadar port problem was further exacerbated by China's insistence on Yuan being accepted as legal cash in the area.
- In retaliation, the Standing Committee of the Pakistan National Assembly ordered an investigation into the China Overseas Ports Holding Company (Pakistan) in 2018, alleging that the company had been functioning without a legitimate security clearance.
- China declined to extend its CPEC cooperation with Pakistan in 2022 in the domains of energy, water management, and climate change.

- **The CPEC's effects on India:**

- **India's Autonomy:**

- India has long opposed the project since it goes through the part of Gilgit-Baltistan that is held by Pakistan, known as Kashmir.
- The Kashmir Valley, which is situated on the Indian side of the border, is thought to have another economic route linkage via the corridor.
- Political and commercial figures in the area have pushed for Kashmir to be recognised as a "Special Economic Zone" on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC).
- India's claim over the 73,000 sq km area, which is home to more than 1.8 million people, will be undermined if the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is effective in strengthening the notion of the area as officially recognised Pakistani territory.

- **Chinese Domination in the Marine Industry:**

- Trade with China is facilitated by the Panama Canal for major US East Coast ports.
- China will be able to provide most enterprises in North and Latin America with a more affordable and expedited trade route once CPEC is fully operating, hence eliminating the need to travel across the entire Western Hemisphere.
- China may now determine the conditions for cross-border product flow between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans thanks to this.

- **Chinese Pearl String:**

- China's influence in the Indian Ocean has been expanding with the 'String of Pearls' goal.
- This phrase alludes to China's plan to encircle India with a web of ports and airstrips.
- China's sovereignty over Gwadar port, coupled with its presence at the ports of Chittagong (Bangladesh), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Port Sudan (Sudan), Maldives, Somalia, and Seychelles, affirms its dominance over the Indian Ocean.

- **The Rise of Pakistan as a Destination for Outsourcing:**

- It might hasten the economic development of Pakistan.
- Pakistan's top three trading partners include the United States and the United Arab Emirates, where its exports, mainly to the textile and construction material industries, directly compete with those of India.
- Pakistan will be in a strong position to overtake India in these markets due to the ease with which raw materials can be obtained from China, even if doing so will reduce the volume of Indian exports.

- **Chinese Dominance in Commercial Leadership and a Robust BRI:**

- China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has often been perceived as a political tool to assert Chinese dominance over the area.
- A significant step in the same direction is CPEC.
- India's hopes of gaining a permanent seat on the UN Security Council may be dashed if China gains more acceptance and integration into the global economy. It will also have a bigger voice in the UN and with other countries.

- **The Belt and Road Initiative of China:**

- The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to establish two new economic routes that will link China and the rest of the world.
- It is an attempt to strengthen China's economic and political might, cultivate a wider, more interconnected market for the country, and establish the prerequisites for China to establish a high-tech economy.

- **The Belt:**

- The concept of the Silk Road Economic "Belt" pertains to the resuscitation of a number of antiquated land-based trade routes that link Europe and Asia, mostly utilising Chinese construction skills.

- **The Path:**

- China announced plans in 2014 to build new seaport facilities along the historic Marco Polo route, which connects Europe, Africa, Asia, and Southeast Asia.
- This would be a lengthier route that would circumvent the Strait of Malacca and pass via Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean while passing through ports, infrastructure, industry, and infrastructure.
- Pakistan is regarded as possibly the most important partner nation in this endeavour through the initiative of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

- **Finances:**

- Through loans to state-owned businesses from its four state-owned banks, the Chinese government is the initiative's underwriter.
- The absence of private sector involvement in the Belt and Road initiative has drawn criticism from other administrations.

- **Way Forward:**

- Pakistan is making an effort to bring its major projects back into funding.
- Although China and Pakistan examined the status of other projects, the Gwadar port's development is still unsettled.

- **Source** → *The Hindu*