

## Indian Hypertension Control Initiative

### ❖ Context

- **Cardiovascular diseases (CVD)** are the leading cause of death among adults in India. One of the major drivers of heart attack and stroke is untreated high blood pressure or hypertension.

### ❖ Background

- Hypertension is a **silent killer** as most patients do not have any symptoms.
- India has **more than 200 million people with hypertension**, and **only 14.5%** of individuals with hypertension are **on treatment**. Unlike many other diseases, hypertension is **easy to diagnose** and can be treated with **low-cost generic drugs**.



### ❖ About the Project

- India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) is a **multi-partner initiative** involving the **Indian Council of Medical Research, WHO-India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and State governments** to improve blood pressure control for people with hypertension.

- The project initiated in 26 districts in 2018 has expanded to more than 100 districts by 2022.
- More than **two million patients** were started on treatment and tracked to see whether they achieved BP control.

### ❖ Results

- The project demonstrated that **blood pressure treatment and control are feasible in primary care settings** in diverse health systems across various States in India.
- The most encouraging finding was that **BP control in the primary care facilities was higher** when compared with hospitals.
- Before IHCI, many patients travelled to higher-level facilities such as community health centres (block level) or district hospitals in the public sector for hypertension treatment.
- The availability of medications in the peripheral facilities made it easier for the patient to continue treatment, thus improving BP control.

## Project WARDEC : India's Upcoming AI-powered Wargame Centre

### ❖ Context

- The **Army Training Command** on recently, **signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with Gandhinagar-based **Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU)** to develop a **'Wargame Research and Development Centre'** in New Delhi.
- The project, which has been given a **prototype name 'WARDEC'**, will be a **first-of-its-kind simulation-based training centre in India** that will use **artificial intelligence (AI)** to **design virtual reality wargames**.

### ❖ What is the Wargame Centre About?

- The **Wargame Research and Development Centre** will be used by the **Army to train its soldiers and test their strategies** through **"metaverse-enabled gameplay"**.
- The wargame models will be **designed to prepare for wars** as well as **counter-terror and counter-insurgency operations**.

### ❖ How Will the Simulation Exercises Play Out?

- Soldiers will test their skills in the **metaverse** where their surroundings will be simulated using a combination of **virtual reality (VR)** and **augmented reality (AR)**.
- **Location:** The centre will come up in a **military zone** in New Delhi.
- **Significance:** The centre will **help soldiers prepare for wars** as well as **counter-terror and counter-insurgency operations**.

### ❖ What Promise Does Ai-based Wargame Simulation Hold?

- Apart from the **armed forces, the BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP and SSB** can also use the **metaverse-enabled simulation exercises for better training**.
- The **use of AI** can provide a totally immersive training experience as it can simulate a **battlefield** close to reality and map several eventualities in the probable event of a war.

### ❖ How Many Countries Use Such Wargaming Drills?

- **Since the 9/11 attacks**, the use of **information technology-enabled wargaming** is preferred by several countries like the **US, Israel, and the UK** to **prepare for possibilities in case of terror attacks or war**.
- **For instance, in 2014**, several world leaders including **former German chancellor Angela Merkel, former US president Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping** played a war simulation game during the Hague Summit about how to react in case of a **nuclear attack**. In that case, the target of the nuclear attack was a **fictional country named Brinia**.

## Face to Face Centres



## Retinoblastoma

### ❖ Context

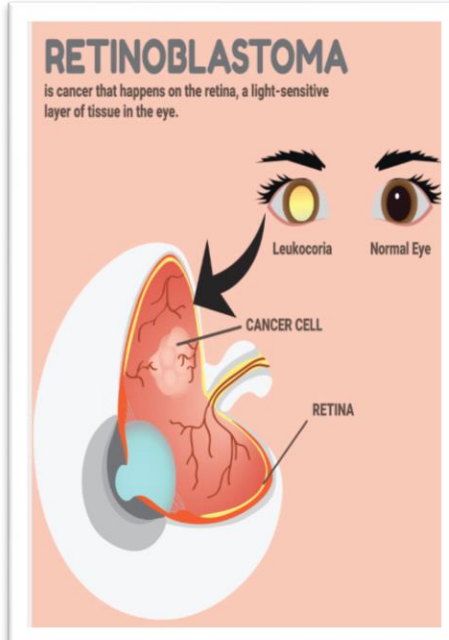
- Retinoblastoma is an **eye cancer** that begins in the retina - the **sensitive lining** on the inside of your eye. Retinoblastoma most **commonly affects young children, but can rarely occur in adults.**

### ❖ Key Highlights:

- The **Department of Ophthalmology**, at the Advanced Eye Centre has been running a Retinoblastoma Clinic here three days a week, **since 1996.**
- The department is the primary referral centre for **entire North India** and the first point of contact for a majority of patients and caters to **Chandigarh, states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, Uttarakhand, parts of UP, Rajasthan and J&K.**
- The department offers all state-of-the-art treatment to all patients, which includes **laser photocoagulation, cryotherapy, intravitreal chemotherapy, transpupillary thermotherapy, and intravenous and intra-arterial chemotherapy.**

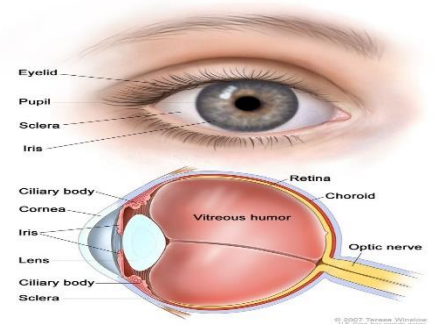
### ❖ What is Retinoblastoma?

- It is the most common **cancer in the eye (malignant tumor)** in small children.
- It can occur in one or both eyes and may be hereditary or sporadic.
- It can be **life-threatening** as well as take away vision if not treated timely and is detected by seeing **White Reflex (WR).**



### ❖ Symptoms:

- **Retinoblastoma mostly affects infants and small children, symptoms are rare. Some symptoms include:**
  - **White color in the center circle of the eye when light is shone in the eye.**
  - Eyes that appear to be looking in different directions.
  - **Eye redness.**
  - **Eye swelling.**



### ❖ Diagnosis:

- **Ocular ultra-sonography and fundus examination** are the immediate OPD procedures.
- Its extent is determined by **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)** and systemic staging investigations (bone marrow biopsy, CSF, and whole-body PET scan).

### ❖ How is Retinoblastoma Managed?

- Retinoblastoma treatment requires a multi-disciplinary approach and this is managed by a team of experts, specialised in taking care of such children.
- Treatment planning is done after a complete clinical examination and classification of the disease (grouping and staging). Treatment is individualised to each patient.
- Chemotherapy can be delivered intravenously or intra-arterial and is given by the paediatric oncologist and is the most common modality of treatment. This has to be followed up with local therapy, which is managed by the ophthalmologist using various modalities.

## News in Between the Lines

### Indo-Pacific Economic Framework

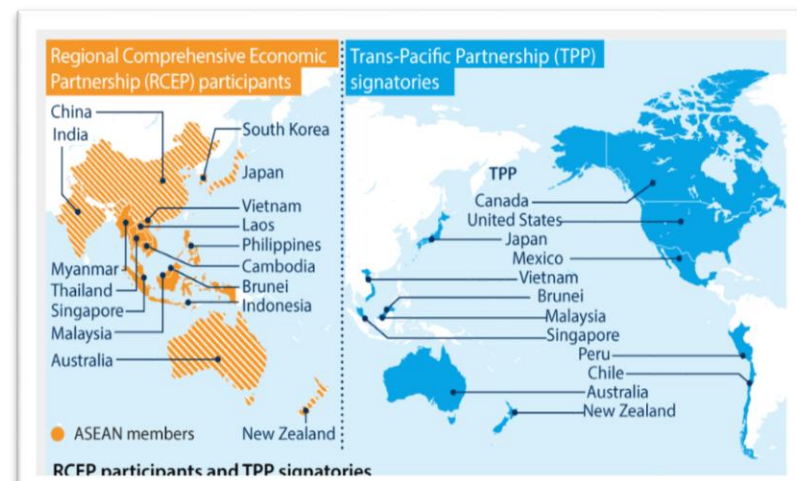


### ❖ Context

- The USA is expected to launch the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework in Tokyo during the US President's visit to East Asia.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- According to a paper put out by the US Congressional Research Service, the IPEF is **not a traditional agreement.**
- It would include **different modules** covering:
  - Fair and resilient trade.
  - Supply chain resilience.
  - Infrastructure.
  - Decarbonisation.
  - Tax and anticorruption.
- Countries would have to sign up to all the components within a module, but **do not have to participate in all modules.**



### Face to Face Centres



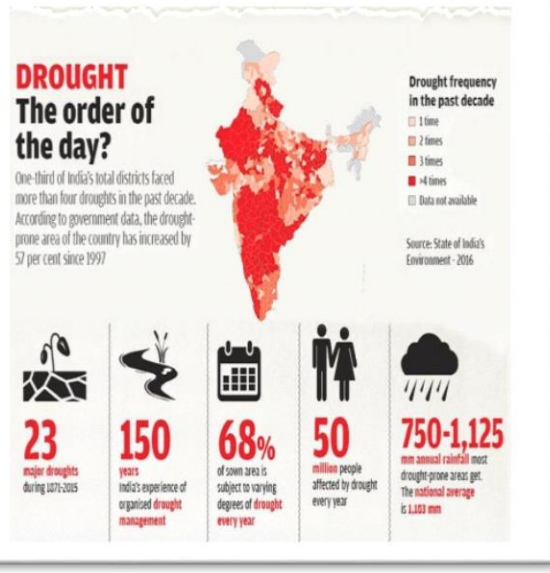
- The framework would **not include market access commitments**, as the agreement is **more of an “administrative arrangement”**.
- The IPEF is also seen as a means by which the US is trying to regain credibility in the region after it pulled out of the **Trans Pacific Partnership**.
- The US is also not part of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**.
- According to experts, IPEF may not enthruse all countries in the region equally as it comes with binding trade rules but no guarantee on market access.

## Operation Fly Formula



- ❖ **Context**
  - In order to meet the nationwide shortage of baby formula in the US, the administration has initiated an operation.
- ❖ **Key Highlights**
  - Under the new operation, cargo aircraft under contract with the Defence Department will be authorised to fly formula supplies from overseas to the US bypassing regular air freighting routes.
  - The shortage had arisen in the country after one of the leading manufacturers shut down its one of the major plants amid reports of children falling ill, some even dying, due to bacterial infection.

## Drought in Number Report



- ❖ **Context**
  - The report was presented by the **UN Convention to Combat Desertification**.
- ❖ **Key Highlights**
  - The **number and duration** of droughts around the world has **increased by an alarming 29% since 2000**.
  - More than a **billion people** around the world were **affected** by drought in 2000-19, making it the **second-worst disaster after flooding**. **Africa was the worst hit**, with 134 droughts, of which 70 occurred in East Africa.
  - According to the report, **if predictions are correct and global warming reaches 3°C by 2100, drought losses could be five times higher** than today's levels. Climate change alone will cause **129 countries to experience an increase in drought exposure** in the next few decades.
  - The **largest increase in drought losses** is projected in the **Mediterranean and the Atlantic regions of Europe**.
  - 84% of all terrestrial ecosystems are threatened by changing and intensifying wildfires. **Many parts of India fall under the list of regions that are vulnerable to drought globally**.
  - The report also stated that **India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reduced by 2 to 5% between 1998 and 2017** due to severe droughts in the country.
  - Globally, droughts in the same period caused economic losses of approximately \$124 billion.
- ❖ **Significance of the Report**
  - The report is a collection of data on the effects of droughts on our ecosystem and how they can be mitigated through efficient planning for the future.
  - The report also helps inform **negotiations surrounding key decisions** by the UNCCD's 197 member parties at the 15th Conference of Parties (**COP15**), currently underway in **Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**.

## Good Friday Peace Accord 1998

- ❖ **Context**
  - The US House of Representatives Speaker told Britain there could be no U.S.-U.K. trade deal if it proceeds with plans to unilaterally scrap some of the rules governing trade with Northern Ireland.
- ❖ **Background**
  - Britain had warned European Union authorities that it could discard post-Brexit regulations negotiated with Brussels, including border checks on some goods shipped from mainland Britain to Northern Ireland.
  - The USA views the existing agreement as essential to maintaining the 1998 Good Friday peace deal, brokered by the U.S.

### Face to Face Centres





### ❖ About the Accord

- It is also known as the **Belfast Agreement**.
- The peace deal ended three decades of the conflict in Northern Ireland between **Catholic nationalist militants (minority)** and **pro-British Protestant (majority) paramilitaries** in which around 3600 people were killed.
- It called for a **devolved government** in Northern Ireland. It led to the establishment of three “strands” of administrative relationships.
  - The first strand provided for the creation of the **Northern Ireland Assembly**, which would be an elected assembly responsible for most local matters.
  - The second was an institutional arrangement for **cross-border cooperation** on a range of issues between the governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
  - The third called for **continued consultation** between the British and Irish governments.

### Article 246A



### ❖ Context

- The SC has ruled that the recommendations of the GST council only have persuasive value and are not binding on centre and states.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- The judgement pointed out that the **Article 246A (1) stipulates that both Parliament and states have simultaneous power to legislate on GST**.
- The recommendations of the GST council are a product of a collaborative dialogue involving the union and states.
- Under the **second provision** of the article, **Parliament has exclusive power to make laws with respect to goods and services tax where the supply of goods, or of services, or both takes place in the course of inter-State trade or commerce**.

### Puri Heritage Corridor Project



### ❖ Context

- The ambitious Puri heritage corridor project of the Odisha government has **landed into a controversy**.

### ❖ Key Highlights:

- According to **ASI**, the Odisha state government was constructing the Puri **Heritage Corridor project** without proper licence in protected and controlled areas of the monument.
- A PIL has been filed in court against the proposal, which has prompted worries about its influence on the structural safety of the Puri temple.
- Conceived in 2016, the Project aims to transform the **holy town of Puri into an international place of heritage**.
- The project includes redevelopment of **Puri lake and Musa river revival plan**.
- **Puri Jagannath Temple** is an important **Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Jagannath**, a form of **Sri Krishna in Puri in Odisha**.
- The temple is believed to have been constructed in the **12<sup>th</sup> century** by **King Anatarman Chodaganga Deva** of the **Eastern Ganga Dynasty**.
- Jagannath Puri temple is called '**Yamanika Tirtha**' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the **power of 'Yama'**, the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- **Famous For : Annual Ratha Yatra**, or **chariot festival**, in which the three principal deities are pulled on huge and elaborately decorated temple cars.

### ❖ Other Important Monuments in Odisha:

- **Konark Sun Temple (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Konark, Puri.**
- **Tara Tarini Temple, Purushottampur, Ganjam.**
- **Lingaraj Temple, in Bhubaneswar.**
- **Udaygiri and Khandagiri Caves, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar.**

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DELHI MUKHERJEE NAGAR: 9205274741, 42 | LAXMI NAGAR : 9205212500, 9205962002 | RAJENDRA NAGAR: 9205274743 | UTTAR PRADESH PRAYAGRAJ: 0532-2260189, 8853467068 | LUCKNOW (ALIGANJ): 0522-4025825, 9506256789 | LUCKNOW (GOMTI NAGAR): 7234000501, 7234000502 | GREATER NOIDA: 9205336037, 38 | KANPUR: 7887003962, 7897003962 | GORAKHPUR : 7080847474, 9161947474 | ODISHA BHUBANESWAR: 9818244644/7656949029

