



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 17-05-2024

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World migration report 2024

Syllabus: GS-1: Population and migration.

Context:

- *The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has released the World Migration Report 2024.*

Key Points:

- *The report highlights **significant changes in global migration trends.***
- *There's a notable **increase in the number of displaced individuals** worldwide, reaching a record high.*
- ***Conflict, violence, disasters, and other factors** have contributed to the displacement of approximately 117 million people.*
- *India is experiencing a pronounced impact of **climate change on internal migration**, particularly from regions like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.*
- *India stands as the **home to the largest number of international migrants**, approximately 18 million, with a significant portion residing in the UAE, USA, and Saudi Arabia.*
- *In 2022, India maintained its position as the **leading remittance destination**, receiving over USD 111 billion, becoming the first country to surpass the USD 100 billion mark.*

About International Organization for Migration (IOM)

- ***Established in 1951** as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) post-World War II.*
- ***Underwent name changes:** PICMME to the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in 1952, then to the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) in 1980, and finally to the International Organization for Migration in 1989, signifying its transition into a migration-focused agency.*
- *Formally affiliated with the **United Nations in 2016**, solidifying its status as a related organization.*

Members:

- *Currently boasts 175 Member States and 8 states holding Observer status.*
- *India joined as an IOM Member State on 18th June 2008.*

Location: *Headquarters situated in Geneva, Switzerland.*

Foetus has right to live:SC

Syllabus: GS-2: Fundamental Right - Right to life

Context:

- *Foetus has right to live: SC rejects plea to abort 27-week pregnancy.*

More about news:

- *The court emphasized the **fetus's right to live.***
- *Justices **B R Gavai, S V N Bhatti, and Sandeep Mehta** questioned the right of the fetus to survive.*
- *The woman's lawyer argued that the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act focuses on the **mother's rights** and mentioned the **woman's delicate mental state.***
- *The Delhi High Court previously denied the abortion request, citing a report from AIIMS doctors that the **fetus was healthy and there was no danger to the mother.***
- *The High Court ruled that terminating the pregnancy was **neither ethical nor legally permissible** since the fetus was viable and normal.*
- *Last month, **the Supreme Court allowed a 14-year-old rape victim** to terminate her 27-28 week pregnancy in an exceptional case but later reversed the decision due to health concerns raised by the girl's mother.*
- *The Supreme Court emphasized that medical boards must consider **both physical and emotional wellbeing** when forming opinions on pregnancy termination.*

Practice Question

Q. Discuss the ethical and legal dilemmas surrounding late-term abortion in India, considering the recent Supreme Court judgments. How should the judiciary balance the rights of the mother and the fetus in such cases? (15 marks, 250 words)

Enforcement Directorate

Syllabus: GS-3: Internal Security – Money Laundering.

Context:

- *ED can't make PMLA arrest after cognisance, needs court nod: Supreme Court.*

Supreme Court directive:

- *The Enforcement Directorate (ED) cannot arrest someone directly under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after a special court acknowledges its complaint.*
- **Process after special court's cognisance:** *ED must approach the court if it wants custody of the person accused.*
- **Powers of ED after cognisance:** *ED and its officers cannot use arrest powers under Section 19 of the PMLA.*
- **Procedure for seeking custody:** *ED needs to apply to the special court if it seeks custody of the accused for further investigation.*

Enforcement Directorate (ED)

Introduction:

- *The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is a specialized financial investigation agency under the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India**. It is responsible for enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crime in India.*

Establishment:

- *The **Enforcement Directorate was established in 1956**, under the provisions of the **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947**, which was later replaced by the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999**. Its jurisdiction expanded with the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002**.*

Mandate:

- *The primary mandate of the Enforcement Directorate is to enforce two major laws:*
- **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA):** *FEMA regulates foreign exchange transactions and dealings in India.*
 - *ED ensures compliance with FEMA provisions and investigates violations related to foreign exchange transactions, including external commercial borrowings and overseas investments.*
- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA):** *PMLA aims to prevent money laundering and confiscate properties derived from illegal activities. ED investigates money laundering cases and prosecutes offenders under PMLA.*

Functions:

- **Investigations:** *ED conducts investigations into financial irregularities, money laundering, and **violations of FEMA and PMLA**. It has the authority to summon individuals, examine witnesses, and seize assets.*

- **Adjudication:** ED is empowered to adjudicate cases related to violations of FEMA. It can impose **penalties, confiscate assets**, and take other legal actions against offenders.
- **International Cooperation:** ED collaborates with foreign agencies and organizations to **investigate cross-border financial crimes**, exchange information, and trace illicit funds.
- **Attachment and Confiscation:** ED can attach and confiscate properties acquired through illegal means, including money laundering activities. It freezes bank accounts and other assets suspected to be involved in money laundering until the completion of the investigation.
- **Prosecution:** ED initiates prosecution proceedings against individuals and entities involved in money laundering and other financial crimes. It presents cases before adjudicating authorities and courts for trial.

Organizational Structure:

- The Enforcement Directorate is **headed by a Director**, who is an officer from the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) or the Indian Police Service (IPS).
- It comprises **various specialized units**, including investigation units, adjudication units, legal cells, and administrative divisions.
- The agency **operates at the national level** with regional offices in major cities across India.

FLiRT variant of Covid virus

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology –Diseases.

Context:

- The new coronavirus variant called KP.2 — nicknamed FLiRT — that has been linked to rising cases of Covid-19 in the United States, United Kingdom, and South Korea, has been in circulation in India since November 2023, genomic surveillance data show.

What is the KP.2 variant of the Covid-19 virus?

- KP.2 is a descendant of the **JN.1 variant of the virus**.
- It is a sub-variant of the **Omicron lineage** with new mutations.
- **FLiRT, the nickname of KP.2**, is based on the letters representing two immune escape mutations that allow the virus to evade antibodies.
- These two mutations on the spike protein disrupt the major sites on the spike protein where **antibodies bind and neutralise the SARS-CoV-2 virus**.

- *These mutations allow the virus to escape antibodies.*

What do the genomic data on KP.2 from India show?

- *A little more than half of the 250 KP.2 genomes sequenced by INSACOG — 128 sequences — were from Maharashtra.*
- *The highest number of KP.2 sequences were found in March.*
- *India has been reporting the **highest proportion of KP.2 sequences** in the world, global data show.*
- *KP.2 sequences made up 29% of Covid-19 sequences uploaded by India to the **Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID)**, the world's largest repository of these sequences, over the last 60 days.*

Can KP.2 cause severe disease?

- *FLiRT is characterised by its **ability to evade immunity** from vaccines and previous infections.*
- *Its symptoms are **similar to those of earlier variants**, including fever, cough, fatigue, and digestive issues.*
- *The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that there are currently no indicators suggesting that **KP.2 would cause more severe illness than other strains.***

However, could KP.2 drive up infections?

- ***FLiRT has a heightened transmission rate** and, like its parent JN.1, it is likely to drive a wave of infections.*
- *Also, the infections are likely to spread silently — because without severe symptoms, most people are unlikely to get themselves tested.*
- *The likelihood of **easy spread of the virus through respiratory droplets**, there is need to take stringent precautions, especially for those with a compromised immune system.*
- *Senior citizens are **vulnerable to severe illness** due to factors such as age-related physiological changes, decreased immune function, and the presence of comorbidities.*
- *Research indicates that adults aged 60 and older, **especially those with pre-existing medical conditions** like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, or cancer, are more likely to experience severe and potentially fatal Covid-19 infections compared to other age groups.*
- *People who are **65 and older, or immunocompromised**, and pregnant women are the most vulnerable.*

What are the symptoms of KP.2 infection?

- *This variant, like many of its Omicron predecessors, **mainly affects the upper respiratory tract.***

How can infection be prevented?

- **Social distancing** and the use of well-fitting respirators like N95s or KN95s in indoor public settings protect against all variants of the Covid-19 virus.
- **Increased air flow and filtration in indoor spaces** also help reduce the concentration of virus particles.
- *Vulnerable groups and those living in areas where the infection is in circulation should be especially careful.*

Do we need booster shots of Covid-19 vaccines?

- *Most Covid-19 vaccines available in India are **aimed at the original variant of the virus**, so additional shots are unlikely to help.*
- *The WHO's Covid vaccine advisory group advised the use of JN.1 lineage as the antigen for upcoming vaccine formulations, **as the FLiRT variants are within the JN.1 family.***
- *However the **Indian vaccines are not updated with the JN.1 variant**, and therefore booster doses in India are unlikely to be effective.*
- **Most Indians do not need a booster** because they have probably already had repeated infections, including silent infections with JN.1.

Manipur accounted for 97% of displacements in South Asia

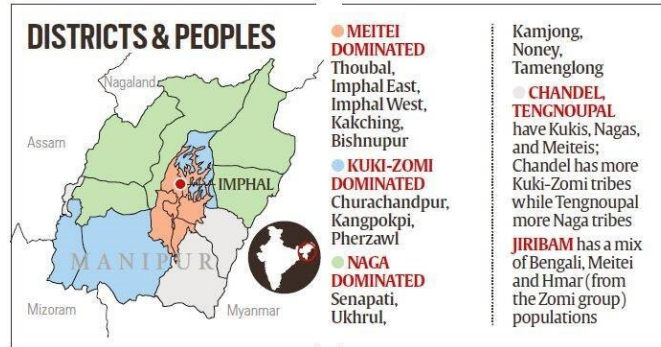
Syllabus: GS-3: Internal Security – ethnic conflicts.

Context:

- *Conflict and violence triggered 69,000 displacements in South Asia in 2023, with Manipur violence alone accounting for 67,000, according to a new report.*

Conflict Displacements in India:

- *Report by the **Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)** highlights the highest number of displacements due to conflict and violence in India since 2018.*



Tribal Solidarity March in Manipur:

- Organized on May 3, 2023, in Manipur's hill districts against Meitei community's demand for **Scheduled Tribe (ST) status**.
- Led to ethnic clashes between Meitei and Kuki communities, resulting in over 200 deaths.

Meitei Community Recognition:

- Manipur High Court called for recommendations to recognize Meitei community as a "scheduled tribe" for minority protection, met with resistance from local tribes, including Kukis.

Underlying Factors:

- Land disputes contributed to tensions.

Violence and Displacements:

- Protests turned violent in Churachandpur district, spreading to other districts, causing around 67,000 displacements, mostly within Manipur, some to neighboring states like Mizoram, Nagaland, and Assam.

Government Response:

- Central government imposed curfews, shut down internet, dispatched security forces, set up relief camps, and established a peace committee chaired by the state governor, but faced disagreements about its composition.

Persistent Displacement:

- All displaced individuals were **still internally displaced** at the end of the year.

Regional Context:

- Around 5.3 million people were **internally displaced across South Asia** due to conflict and violence by the end of 2023, with 80% in Afghanistan.