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Current Affairs

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Sources: THE HINDU and the Indian Express

1. A decade after the Mumbai attack

- According to MK Narayan, former National Security Advisor, 26/11 Mumbai terror is comparable to September 11 terror attacks in the United States.
- The attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 by the Pakistan-based terror outfits, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) was another such attack which shook the country.
- In Mumbai terror attack the authorities in Pakistan, the Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence and the Pakistani armed forces were involved.
- It is difficult to recall any recorded instance in modern times where a state and its various agencies were directly involved in carrying out a terror attack of this nature.
- It was evident from the circumstances of the act that Pakistan agencies were involved at every stage of attack from planning to provide instructions to the terrorists during the entire four-day siege.
- Abu Hamza, one of the conspirators, who was arrested after the 26/11 terror attack told that there was an involvement of Pakistani Special Forces in preparing the 10 member fidayeen group.
- The targets were carefully chosen for maximum impact, i.e. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, the Jewish centre at Nariman House, the Taj and Oberoi Hotels, and the Leopold Cafe, since these places were frequently visited by the Europeans, Indians and the Jews.

Steps taken by India after 26/11 attack

- Coastal security was given high priority.
- A specialised agency named National Investigation Agency was set up in 2009 to deal with terrorist acts.
- The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has been created to make an appropriate database of security related information.

- The Multi Agency Centre (Under IB) was strengthened and its activities were expanded.
- A Joint Operations Centre was constituted to keep an eye over India's extended coastline.
- Terrorism remains a major threat with modern refinements, new terrorist methodologies and terrorism mutating into a global franchise.
- Internet-enabled terrorism and resort to remote plotting is the new threat.
- Some of the new variants of terrorism are
 - 'Enabled terror' or 'remote controlled terror', i.e. the violence planned and guided by a controller thousands of miles away.
 - 'Lone wolf' is the part of a remote-controlled initiative with a controller choosing the target, the nature of the attack and even the weaponry to be used.

2. Supreme Court on right to resign

- In sanjay Jain Vs National Aviation Company of India limited (Air India) case The Supreme Court observes that to resign is a right of an employee.
- Although resign is not absolute but qualified.
- Supreme Court observes that right to resign is not applicable on certain grounds such as
 - If there is any stipulation in the rules or in the terms of appointment.
 - If any disciplinary proceedings are pending or contemplated this is sought to be avoided by resigning from the services.

3. HIV infected children likely to suffer cognitive impairment

1. A new study reveals Children infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) have to endure a significant adverse impact on their neurodevelopment and cognitive functioning
2. The study is carried out by a team of doctors at Fortis Memorial Research Institute in Gurugram, King George Medical University in Lucknow and Sidra Medicine in Doha, Qatar.
3. The neuropsychological assessment was carried out through a specially designed test for children to detect memory span, verbal meaning, mazes, learning names, quantity, discs, hidden figure, closure and exclusion.
4. Findings

- Report highlighted significant fluctuations in regions of the brain that are associated with auditory, language; sensory and motor functional networks of HIV infected children. Similar characteristics were earlier detected in adults.
 - Infected children were also found to have significantly decreased Amplitude of Low Frequency Fluctuations (ALFF) and Functional connectivity (FC) in multiple brain regions that are related to cognition.
5. The findings will facilitate early detection of structural and functional brain changes, allowing appropriate treatment and therapies to improve functional activities in children with immunity disorders.

Killer virus

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) attacks the immune system
- The virus is found in semen, blood, vaginal and anal fluids, and breastmilk
- The virus can be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding
- According to the National Aids Control Organization (NACO), as of 2017, India had 2.14 million people living with HIV
- The most affected population are people who inject drugs, transgenders, gay men and commercial sex workers

5. About HIV

- HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system and is known to affect almost every organ in the human body.

- Nearly 60,000 children in India are currently taking Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) for HIV. Doctors treating these children commonly observe slackened physical as well as mental growth.
 - The virus is present in patient's bloodstream and affects the brain, heart, kidney, liver etc., leaving the patient extremely immuno-compromised
7. Doctors suggests the key to achieving overall growth in HIV infected children is good diet, 100% medicine compliance and regular physical activity.
 8. This would ensure that their viral load is low and CD-4 (immune cells) count is high.

4. Titli cyclone is 'rarest of rare'

1. The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for Africa and Asia has termed 'Titli', the severe cyclonic storm that devastated Odisha in October, as 'rarest cyclone'.
2. In 200 years of history of cyclone tracks, no synthetic track projection captures the Titli type of cyclones.
3. Character which makes Titli cyclones rarest of rare
 - Recurvate after landfall and retaining its destructive potential after landfall and
 - Recurvate away from the coastal areas for more than two days
4. Impact on forecasting system
 - The forecast information available lacked actionable early warning information such as no indication of occurrence of secondary hazards, including landslides far away from the coasts. The highest number of casualties occurred in a village called Baraghara in Gajapati were not evacuated by disaster management team, as the risk is unknown due to rare characteristics of cyclone Titli.
 - Cyclone-risk management are heavily focused on the coastal areas where cyclones cross at their peak intensities. Therefore, coastal areas have been largely well managed through evacuations and other protocols, leading to zero casualties in these areas.

5. About RIMES

- The RIMES is an intergovernmental body registered under United Nations.
- It is owned and managed by 45 collaborating countries in Asia Pacific and Africa Region.
- It seeks to establish regional early warning system within multi-hazard framework for generation and communication of early warning information and capacity building for preparedness and response to trans-boundary hazards.
- It provides information related to Tsunami and extreme weather conditions. It also acts as a test bed for emerging technologies and help to enhance performance