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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(04 July 2024)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- DRUG CONSUMPTION INCREASING: UN
- EXERCISE MAITREE
- PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN IRAN
- MCQs



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DRUG CONSUMPTION INCREASING: UN

The **International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**, or **World Drug Day**, is commemorated every year on **June 26** and aims to increase action in achieving a drug-free world.

THEME FOR THIS YEAR:

This year's campaign recognises that **“effective drug policies must be rooted in science, research, full respect for human rights, compassion, and a deep understanding of the social, economic, and health implications of drug use”**.

THE FINDINGS

- In the decade to 2022, the **number of people using illicit drugs increased to 292 million**, the UNODC report says.
- It noted that most users worldwide consume:
 - **228 million people- cannabis**
 - **60 million people worldwide- opioids,**
 - **30 million people-amphetamines,**

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- **23 million-cocaine**
- **20 million-ecstasy.**
- Further, UNODC found that there was **an increase in overdose deaths** following the **emergence of nitazenes** – a group of **synthetic opioids potentially more dangerous than fentanyl** – in several high-income countries.
- Traffickers in the **Golden Triangle**, a region in Southeast Asia, have found ways to **integrate themselves into other illegal markets**, such as **wildlife trafficking, financial fraud, and illegal resource extraction.**



Heroin flows in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

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- **“Displaced, poor and migrant communities”** bear the brunt of this criminal activity and on occasion are **forced to engage in opium farming or illegal resource extraction** for their survival.
 - This can lead to **civilians becoming drug users or fall into debt** at the Mercy of crime groups.
- These illegal crimes **contribute to environmental degradation** via deforestation, toxic waste dumping and chemical contamination.
- In 2022, cocaine production hit a record high with 2,757 tons produced – A 20 per cent increase from 2021.
 - The increase in supply and demand of the product was accompanied by a surge of violence in nations along the supply chain, especially in Ecuador and Caribbean countries.
 - There was also a spike in health problems within some destination countries in Western and Central Europe.

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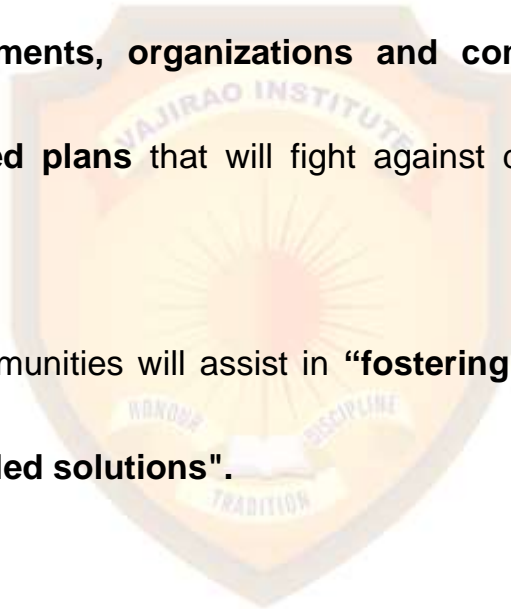


THE HOPE

The UNODC report highlights that the **“right to health is an internationally recognized human right that belongs to all human beings, regardless of a person’s drug use status or whether a person is imprisoned, detained or incarcerated”**.

UNODC’s calls for **governments, organizations and communities** to collaborate on **establishing evidence-based plans** that will fight against drug trafficking and organized crime.

The agency also hopes communities will assist in **“fostering resilience against drug use and promoting community-led solutions”**.



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EXERCISE MAITREE

The Indian Army contingent departed for the **13th edition of India- Thailand joint military Exercise MAITREE**. The exercise is scheduled to be conducted from **1st to 15th July 2024** at **Fort Vachira Prakan in Tak Province of Thailand**.

PREVIOUS EDITION:

Last edition of the same exercise was conducted at **Umroi, Meghalaya** in **September 2019**.

PARTICIPANTS FROM INDIA:

The Indian Army contingent comprising **76 personnel** is being represented mainly by a **Battalion of the Ladakh Scouts** along with personnel from other arms and services.

AIM OF THE EXERCISE

- To foster **Military Cooperation** between India and Thailand.
- Enhance combined capabilities in executing Joint Counter Insurgency/Terrorist Operations in **Jungle and Urban Environment** under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter.

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- The Exercise will focus on **high degree of physical fitness, joint planning and Joint tactical drills.**
- Will enable the two sides to **share their best practices** in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for conduct of joint operations.
- The Exercise will facilitate **developing interoperability, bonhomie and camaraderie** between soldiers of both the countries.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE EXERCISE

Tactical Drills to be practiced during the exercise will include:

- Creation of a Joint Operation Centre.
- Establishing an Intelligence & Surveillance Centre.
- Employment of Drones and Counter Drone Systems.
- Securing of a Landing Site,
- Small Team Insertion & Extraction,
- Special Heliborne Operations,
- Cordon and Search Operations,
- Room Intervention Drills and
- Demolition of Illegal Structures.

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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN IRAN

On June 28, Iran held the **first round of voting to elect a new President**, necessitated by the **death of Ebrahim Raisi** in a helicopter crash in May.

Since **neither of the top two candidates** —

- **69-year-old cardiac surgeon Masoud Pezeshkian, a reformist, and**
- **58-year-old hardliner saeed jalili** —

won more than 50% of votes, they will face off in a **runoff election on July 5**.

HOW IS THE PRESIDENT ELECTED?

Many people apply to become candidates but the establishment oversees the Selection process, and only vetted candidates can contest.

Most candidates are from the establishment, and **only a few reformists** can enter The fray.

People vote directly for the candidates. Securing more than 50% votes is Necessary.

This presidential elections has witnessed only 40% voter turnout with no candidate surpassing the 50% mark in the first round.

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POLITICS IN IRAN

Since the **Islamic Revolution of 1979**, Iran's politics has developed between two poles.

- **On the one side are the conservatives** who want to strictly **adhere to the tenets of Twelver Shi'ism**, Iran's state religion, and want to **implement its religious codes across society**. They frame the Revolution as a **radical assertion against Western imperialism**, and enjoy **massive support, especially among the poorer sections of the population**.
- **On the other side are the so-called 'reformists'** who, while remaining **loyal to the Revolution**, want **more flexibility both in domestic and international matters**. For instance, they **support greater rights for women, strengthening civil society and Human rights**; they also want free elections and more conciliatory relations with the West.

The **tussle between conservatives and reformists has been the central theme in Iranian politics**.

IRAN'S PRESIDENT V/S SUPREME LEADER

Iran's **President operates within the overall authority of the Supreme Leader**. But he is **nonetheless a powerful figure** in the Iranian political structure, with a significant role in determining how the country functions.

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- He plays a crucial role in **mediating between the legislature and the executive**, and **appoints ministers and vice presidents**.
- The President also makes **key foreign policy decisions**.
 - Then **President Hassan Rouhani** acted with significant authority during the **JCPOA negotiations**.
 - Among **Raisi's major achievements** was the **Iran-Saudi deal**, brokered by china.
 - It was he who raised the pitch for an **'Axis of Resistance'** — an informal, Iran-led political-military coalition comprising the Islamic resistance in Iraq, the Syrian government, the Lebanese Hezbollah, Yemeni Houthis, and Palestinian groups including Hamas.

CAN THE PRESIDENT'S AUTHORITY BE SUPERCEDED?

The Iranian President's authority is superseded **only in the event of a clash between him and the Supreme Leader** — which has only happened during reformist Governments.

It is important to note, however, that **the Supreme Leader does not have to be a conservative**. Iran's religious clergy is not a monolith, and **there are many liberal ayatollahs (high clerics in Twelver Shi'ism)**.

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In fact, **it was a liberal cleric** and human rights activist named **Hussein Ali Montazeri** who was **designated as the successor of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini**, and the conservative **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** became Supreme Leader Only after a power struggle.



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MCQs

1. When is the World Drug Day observed?

- (A) 24 June
- (B) 25 June
- (C) 26 June
- (D) 28 June

Ans. (C)

2. Consider the statements and mark the correct one according to the report of UNODC on drug consumption:

1. Drug consumption has increased in the last decade worldwide.
 2. Golden triangle is getting less integrated with the world as there are other drug growing regions in Latin America gaining prominence.
- (A) Only 1
 - (B) Only 2
 - (C) Both 1 & 2
 - (D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (A)

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3. Consider the following statements wrt Exercise Maitree and mark **how many** of them is/are not correct.

1. It is a maritime exercise between India & Thailand.
2. It aims at building interoperability.
3. It aims at developing counter insurgency operational skills for Jungle & Urban areas.

- (A) Only 1 statement is incorrect.
- (B) Only 2 statements are incorrect.
- (C) All the statements are incorrect.
- (D) None of the statements are incorrect.

Ans. (A)

4. Consider the following statements and mark the correct statement:

1. Iran's President operates within the overall authority of the Supreme Leader.
2. The Supreme Leader of Iran is always from the conservative faction.
3. The president of Iran is democratically chosen.

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- (A) Only 1 & 2
- (B) Only 1 & 3
- (C) Only 1
- (D) All of the above

Ans. (B)

5. Who is the current supreme leader of Iran?

- (A) Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
- (B) Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini
- (C) Ebrahim Raisi
- (D) None of the above

Ans. (A)



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