The background features a dark blue gradient with a starry space pattern. Overlaid on this are several technical diagrams, including circular gauges with numerical scales (e.g., 40, 150, 160, 170, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, 260) and various circular arrows indicating rotation or flow. The text is centered in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

NEWS ANALYSIS THE HINDU PIB

JUNE 1, 2018

Google drive link : <http://bit.ly/2MPH83v>

SHARP DROP IN TOBACCO SMOKING IN INDIA, SAYS WHO

- **Context** - From 19.4% in 2000, the prevalence of smoking tobacco in India dropped down to 11.5% in 2005, according to a World Health Organization report release.
- The report projected the prevalence to drop down further to 9.8% by 2020 and 8.5% by 2025
- “The prevalence of tobacco use has decreased more slowly in low and middle-income countries than in high-income countries, because the introduction of strong tobacco control policies by low and middle-income countries is impeded by relentless lobbying from the tobacco industry”.
- While the report only covered tobacco usage in the form of smoking, India has a large population of chewing tobacco users, thus posing additional burden.
- Tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure were major causes of cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks and stroke, contributing to approximately three million deaths a year.

Silent killer

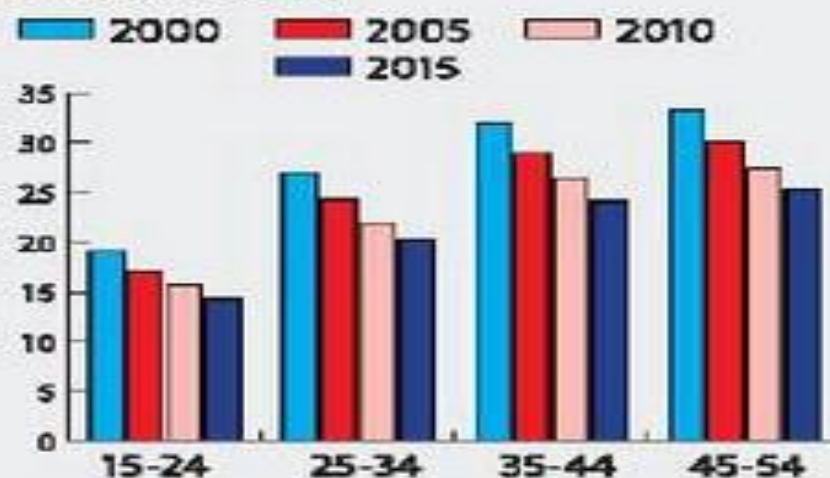
Globally, the number of tobacco smokers has seen a dip between 2000 and 2015. A projection by the World Economic Forum suggests that approximately 18% of men in India will continue to smoke in 2020



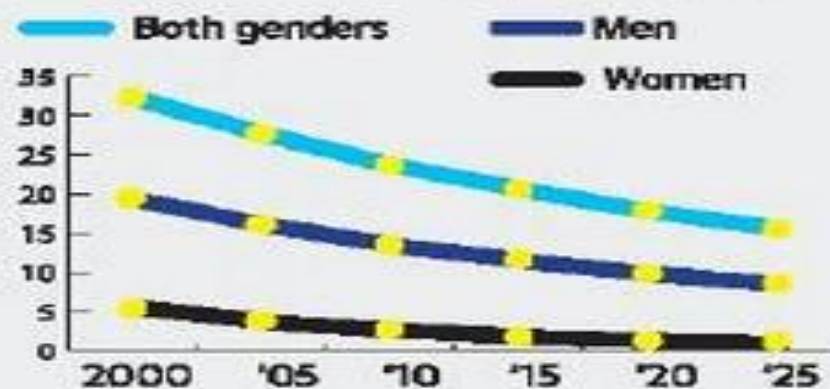
Sand artist Sudarshan Pattnaik with his message. - PTI

- Tobacco kills 7 million people every year
- Cancer accounts for more deaths worldwide than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined
- One in five cancer deaths are caused by tobacco use globally
- Cancer is one of the 10 leading causes of deaths in India
- Tobacco use is the leading cause of cancer in India
- 90% of oral cancers and 40% of all cancers are caused by tobacco use
- The new WHO reports claims that 27% smoked tobacco in 2000 compared to 20% in 2016

Global prevalence of smoking tobacco (In %)



Prevalence of tobacco smoking in India (current and projected) (%)



U.S. RENAMES PACIFIC COMMAND

- **Context** - The U.S. renamed its strategically important Pacific Command (PACOM) as the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, in a move widely seen as a public expression of America's keenness to count India as key partner in its strategic planning.
- **Significance** -The Indo-Pacific Command is critical for “a region open to investment and free, fair and reciprocal trade, not bound by any nation's predatory economics or threat of coercion, for the Indo-Pacific has many belts and many roads”.

'MISSION RAFTAAR'

- **Context** -The Indian Railways recently conducted a one-day workshop 'Mission Raftaar' in which officials discussed ways to increase the average speed of freight and passenger trains.
- This workshop is an exercise with the top management of the railways to brainstorm about increase in speed of freight and passenger trains.
- 'Mission Raftaar' aims at doubling the average speed of freight trains and increasing the average speed of coaching trains by 25 kmph over a five-year period.
- The average speed of freight trains is 24 kmph and that of passenger trains, excluding suburban trains, is 44 kmph. Increasing the average speed of trains is considered essential for reducing travel time for passengers, transit time for cargo, operational cost, and improving revenues and the railway's market share.

STUDY SHOWS BIG ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SMALL HYDRO-POWER PROJECTS

- **Context** - The first-ever scientific study in India of small hydro-power projects (SHPs) has revealed that despite their being promoted as generating clean energy, the plants have a **significant ecological impact** and there is a correlation between the **rise in SHPs and the increase in human-elephant conflict**.
- According to a release issued by the Wildlife Conservation Society India Program, SHPs also cause **alterations in stream geometry** and **affect the water quality and freshwater fish communities** in the Western Ghats.
- SHPs are often promoted as a cleaner alternative to large hydro-power projects as they are assumed to have little or no environmental impact. **In India, they are defined as plants generating up to 25 MW of power.**

- The study found that SHPs affect the river flow by reducing it immediately below the dam and causing fluctuation when the water is released back into the river after power generation both of which have consequences on fish assemblages
- The study has also revealed a correlation between the proliferation of SHPs and the corresponding increase in human-elephant conflicts in those areas.
- The research showed that such conflicts increased in the regions where new SHPs were being constructed.
- Way Forward - Given the importance of the region as a watershed and a part of the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot, there is an urgent need to monitor, regulate, and evaluate the impact of large-scale infrastructure development.

MAINS ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q.) Small Hydropower Projects have a big ecological impact. Comment. (200 words)

Answer Structure:

- Introduction- Define small hydropower projects.
- Body- Write about the demerits of SHPs and how they are posing a danger to natural environment. Give example of Uttarakhand Disaster, also proposed are SHP's on Ken-Betwa link
- Conclusion- Write what needs to be done for sustainable development.