

GS - I

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page Mains 2020
Page PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Protection Of Maithili Language

In The New

A committee constituted for making a report for the Promotion and Protection of Maithili Language and its scripts, has submitted its report to MHRD in which it has made several recommendations for promotion and protection of Maithili language.

developed in a composite manner despite having been accorded a constitutional status in the constitution.

Important recommendations of the committee are as follows:

1. To establish a Script and Manuscript Centre at Darbhanga in any one of the Universities viz. Kameshwar Singh Sanskrit University or Lalit Narayan Mithila University.
2. Early completion of the work pertaining to Unicode Scripts of Mithilakshar by Technology Development of Indian Languages (TDIL) and
3. To prepare audio-visual teaching materials for teaching the Mithilakshar scripts.

Background:

- *Mithilakshar or Tirhuta is the script of broader cultural Mithila.* It is an extremely ancient script and is one of the scripts of the broader North Eastern India.
- The scripts of *Mithilaksar, Bangla, Assamese, Nebari, Odia and Tibetan are part of the family.*
- Mithilakshar had come to its current shape by 10th Century AD. *The oldest form of Mithilakshar is found in the Sahodara stone inscriptions of 950 AD.* Afterwards, the scripts has been used throughout Mithila from Champaran to Deoghar.

Need for protection:

- Use of this script has been on decline since last 100 years and therefore our culture is getting decimated.
- Because its own script is not being used, the Maithili language is getting

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM)

In The News

20th edition of Bharat Rang Mahotsav is being held in New Delhi. It is being *organized by National School of Drama (NSD)*.

Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM):

1. It is the *annual international theatre festival of India* organized by the National School of Drama (NSD).
2. It was established two decades ago to stimulate the growth and development of theatre across India.
3. Originally a national festival showcasing the work of the most creative theatre workers in India, BRM has evolved to international scope, hosting theatre groups from around the world, and is now the largest theatre festival of Asia.

Ghumot To Be Declared Goa's Heritage Musical Instrument

In The News

Ghumot, an indigenous earthen drum will soon be notified as a heritage instrument of Goa.

- Ghumot is an indigenous earthen drum fashioned as a designed clay pot, with the skin of the monitor lizard stretched taut across the pot's mouth, forming a drumhead. It is a percussion instrument widely played during Ganesh Chaturthi Aarties.
- *The instrument was banned due to the use of the skin of the endangered monitor lizard for the drum membrane.* In recent years, ghumot makers have started using goat skin instead.
- *The ban is applicable to the use of any animal listed in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972,* and that the goat is not one of them. Monitor lizard is listed under this



Eco Circuit

In The News : ‘*Development of Eco Circuit: Pathanamthitta – Gavi – Vagamon – Thekkady*’ under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of Ministry of Tourism was recently inaugurated.

consultant to be appointed by the Mission Directorate.

- **Eco Circuit** is one of the fifteen thematic circuits identified for development under Swadesh Darshan Scheme- Integrated development of theme- based tourist circuits in the country.
- **Major works carried out under the project includes** Eco Adventure Tourism Park at Vagamon, Cultural Centre at Kadamannitta, Eco Log Huts at Peerumedu, Idukki, Approach Roads, Walking trails, Rain Shelters at Pine Valley Forest, Thekkady, Kumily, Moozhiyar Dam, Penstock and Kakki Dam.

Features of Swadesh Darshan Scheme:

1. The scheme is 100% centrally funded for the project components undertaken for public funding.
2. It leverages the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and corporate sector.
3. Funding of individual project will vary from state to state and will be finalised on the basis of detailed project reports prepared by PMC (Programme Management Consultant).
4. A National Steering Committee (NSC) will be constituted with Minister in charge of M/O Tourism as Chairman, to steer the mission objectives and vision of the scheme.
5. A Mission Directorate headed by the Member Secretary, NSC as a nodal officer will help in identification of projects in consultation with the States/ UTs governments and other stake holders.
6. PMC will be a national level

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Guru Ravidas

In The News

Sant Ravidas Jayanti was celebrated on February 19th. This year is said to be the **642nd birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas**.

About Guru Ravidas:

- Guru Ravidas was a North Indian *mystic poet of the bhakti movement*.
- While the exact year of his birth is not known, it is believed that the saint was born in 1377 C.E.
- Guru Ravidas Jayanti is celebrated on *Magh Purnima*, which is the full moon day in the Hindu calendar month of Magha.
- The *Adi Granth of Sikhs, in addition to the Panchvani are the two of the oldest documented sources of the literary works of Guru Ravidas*.
- Notably, *he belonged to an untouchable caste and suffered a lot of atrocities as a result*. However, the saint chose to focus on spiritual pursuits and also penned several devotional songs which made a huge impact in the Bhakti movement during the 14th to 16th century CE.

Guru Ravidas Teachings:

- Guru Ravidas spoke against the caste divisions and spoke of removing them to promote unity. His teachings resonated with the people, leading to a religion being born called the *Ravidassia religion*, or *Ravidassia Dharam* based on his teachings.
- He taught about the omnipresence of God and said that a human soul is a particle of God and hence Ravidas rejected the idea that people considered lower caste cannot meet God. He said in his teachings that the only way to meet God was to free the mind from the duality.

Salt Satyagraha Memorial

In The News

National Salt Satyagraha Memorial has been opened at Dandi in Navsari district, Gujarat. It was dedicated to the nation on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 71st death anniversary (30th January).

- The memorial encapsulates the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi- Aghra for Swadeshi, Swatchagrah and Satyagraha.

a mass civil disobedience movement throughout India as millions broke salt laws by either making salt or buying illegal salt.

Significance:

- The memorial aims *to serve as a reminder of the great sacrifices made by the people of the nation for the cause of freedom*. It is a tribute to the Satyagrahis led by Gandhi Ji, who worked for India's freedom and is expected to be a major attraction for the tourists.

Historical Background:

During that time, the British had prohibited Indians from collecting or selling salt. Indians were also forced to buy the staple diet ingredient from the British, who, not only exercised monopoly over its manufacture and sale but also levied a heavy salt tax. The Salt March was a collective beginning of a mass resistance movement against the British tyranny.

About the Salt Satyagraha:

- On March 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi embarked a *historic Salt March from Sabarmati Ashram* in Gujarat's Ahmedabad to the village of Dandi in the state's coastal area *to protest against the steep tax the British levied on salt*. The Salt March began on March 12, 1930 and continued till April 6, 1930.
- It was a 24-day Salt March, which was non-violent in nature, is historically significant as it led to the *mass Civil Disobedience Movement*.
- Upon reaching the seashore in Dandi, Mahatma Gandhi broke the law by producing illegal salt. This later turned into

40th Anniversary Of Iran Revolution

In The News : Iran marks 40th anniversary of Islamic revolution.

About the Iranian Revolution:

- Iranian Revolution, also known as Islamic Revolution or the 1979 Revolution, was *a series of events involving the overthrow of the monarch of Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, and replacing his government with an Islamic republic under the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini*, a leader of one of the factions in the revolt.
- The reason for the revolution was *to stop the oppression under the western secular policies*.
- The *movement against the United States-backed monarchy* was supported by various leftist and Islamist organizations and student movements.
- **Outcome:** A multiclass opposition overthrew an autocratic ruler, leading to the establishment of a theocratic state. This outcome contrasts sharply with other modern revolutionary movements, which have been fought in the name of nationalism or socialism and which have concluded with the transfer of power to a secular, modernizing intelligentsia.

Polar Vortex

In The News

Meteorologists have blamed a phenomenon called *the polar vortex for the bitter cold that has descended on much of the central and eastern United States* this week, forcing residents to huddle indoors, closing schools and businesses and cancelling flights.

- The term ‘polar vortex’ has become more commonly used in the past couple of years but the phenomenon has been around forever. There is some debate among scientists about whether polar vortices have become more frequent and, if so, what effect climate change might be having on them.

also leads to a warm Arctic not only in the stratosphere but also in the troposphere as well.

- *A warmer Arctic*, in turn, favours more severe winter weather in the Northern Hemisphere mid-latitudes including the eastern US.

Features:

1. The polar vortex *spins in the stratosphere*.
2. Usually, when the vortex is strongest, *cold air is less-likely to plunge deep into North America or Europe*. In other words, it forms a wall that protects the mid-latitudes from cold Arctic air.
3. But occasionally, *the polar vortex is disrupted and weakens*, due to wave energy propagating upward from the lower atmosphere. When this happens, the stratosphere warms sharply in an event known as sudden stratospheric warming, in just a few days, miles above the Earth’s surface.
4. *The warming weakens the polar vortex*, shifting its location somewhat south of the pole or, in some instances, ‘splitting’ the vortex up into ‘*sister vortices*’.

Effects of Polar Vortex:

- The split higher up in the atmosphere can give rise to both, *sudden and delayed effects*, much of which involves declining temperatures and extreme winter weather in the eastern US along with northern and western Europe.
 - *A sudden stratospheric warming*

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Magnetic North Pole Drifting Fast Towards Russia

In The News :

News publications across the world have been reporting that the *magnetic north pole is drifting fast from the Canadian Arctic and towards Russia*.

Origin of Earth's magnetism:

- The origin of Earth's magnetism lies in its outer core, a more than 2,000-km layer of liquid iron and some other metals like nickel, that surrounds the central core, or the innermost part.
- This liquid iron is in constant motion due to Earth's rotation and various other reasons, and this motion produces a magnetic field.

What's the issue now?

- Currently, the magnetic north pole is located somewhere over northern Canada, a fact discovered in 1831 by Sir James Clark Ross. Since then the magnetic north pole has been moving across the Canadian Arctic towards Russia, and has moved hundreds of miles over the last several decades. This phenomenon is known as the Polar Shift Theory.
- Scientists have now realised the pace of this movement has suddenly increased, quite significantly, from about 14-15 km per year till the 1990s to about 55 km per year in the last few years. This has led to scientists updating the World Magnetic Model (WMM) that tracks this movement. It was a year ahead of schedule.

Why it is moving faster?

- Scientists do not have full clarity on. The movement of liquid iron and other metals in the outer core of the Earth is known to influence the magnetic field, but this movement is chaotic and turbulent. Scientists do not fully understand how the movement happens or why.
- The study of the phenomena happening

inside the earth can

only be done indirectly or through computer modelling, because of the extremely hot temperatures prevailing there. Scientists hope that this acceleration in the shifting of magnetic north pole would throw some new insights into the phenomena happening deep inside the Earth's surface.

What is the World Magnetic Model?

- *James Clark Ross first located magnetic north in 1831 in the scattered islands of Canada's Nunavut territory.* Since then, the pole has largely marched north, traversing hundreds of miles over the last several decades.
- To keep up with all these changes, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the British Geological Survey developed what eventually became known as the World Magnetic Model.
- The model is updated every five years, with the last update in 2015. Between each update, scientists check the model's accuracy against data from ground magnetic observatories and the European Space Agency's Swarm mission—a trio of magnetic-field mapping satellites that zip around Earth 15 to 16 times each day.

What is Magnetic North Pole? How is it different from Geographic North Pole?

- The Earth has *two north poles- magnetic and geographic*.
 1. **Geographic north pole-** It is northern axis around which the earth rotates and is fixed. The North Pole is located in the middle of the Arctic Ocean.
 2. **The Magnetic North Pole** (also known as the North Dip Pole) is a point on Ellesmere Island in Northern Canada where the northern lines of attraction enter the Earth.

A compass needle will point to the Magnetic North Pole – which is different from the geographic north.

Warming Imperils Clouds That Deter ‘Hothouse’ Conditions

In The News

A study by *California Institute of Technology* has found that Marine clouds that protect us from hothouse Earth conditions by reflecting sunlight back into space could break up and vanish if CO₂ in the atmosphere triples. Computer modeling shows that *marine stratus clouds could disappear if atmospheric CO₂ levels climb high enough, raising global temperatures.*

Concerns highlighted by the study:

- Stratocumulus clouds cover about 20% of subtropical oceans, mostly near western seaboard such as the coasts of California, Mexico and Peru. *When they disappear, Earth warms dramatically, by about eight degrees Celsius — in addition to the global warming that comes from enhanced greenhouse concentrations alone.*
- A temperature increase of that magnitude would *melt polar ice and lift sea levels tens of metres.*
- The last time the planet was that hot, some 50 million years ago during the Eocene Epoch, crocodiles roamed the Arctic. Even half that much warming would overwhelm humanity's capacity to adapt.

What are stratocumulus clouds?

- Stratocumulus clouds are *low-level clumps or patches of cloud varying in colour from bright white to dark grey.*
- They are the most common clouds on earth recognised by their well-defined bases with some parts often darker than others. They usually have gaps between them, but they can also be joined together.

How do stratocumulus clouds form?

- Stratocumulus clouds usually form from a layer of stratus cloud breaking up.
- They are indicators of a change in the weather and are usually present near a warm, cold or occluded front.

What weather is associated with stratocumulus clouds?

- Stratocumulus clouds can be present in all types of weather conditions, from dry settled weather to more rainy conditions, but they themselves are often not the culprit.
- Stratocumulus are often mistaken for rain clouds, when in reality it is quite rare to get anything more than the lightest drizzle from them, if anything at all.

Operation Digital Board

In The News

Recently, Ministry of Human Resource Development launched Operation Digital Board (ODB).

About Operation Digital Board

- o It aims to set up one digital and interactive board per classroom in **government and government-aided schools by 2022**.
- o It will be introduced in schools from **class 9th onwards as well as in higher education institutions**.
- o It aims to make the learning as well as the teaching process interactive and popularize **flipped learning** as a pedagogical approach.
- o **University Grant Commission** will be the implementing agency of ODB for **higher education**.

Flipped Learning

- It is a pedagogical approach in which the conventional notion of **classroom-based learning** is inverted, so that students are introduced to the **learning** material before class, with **classroom** time then being used to deepen understanding through discussion with peers and problem- solving activities.

Other digital initiatives for Education

- **SWAYAM:** A Web portal where Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) will be available free of cost on all kinds of subjects with a provision of certificate / credit-transfer.
- **Swayam Prabha:** It is a group of 32 DTH channels devoted to telecasting of high-quality educational programmes on 24X7 basis using the GSAT-15 satellite.
- **Diksha:** National Digital Infrastructure for Teachers portal, to help teachers to create training content, profile, in-class resources, assessment aids, news and announcement and connect with teacher community.

Development And Welfare Board For Denotified, Nomadic And Semi-Nomadic Communities

In The News

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for constitution of Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Communities (DNCs).

Details

- During the British colonial rule, if the local government had reason to believe that a gang or a tribe had “addicted to systematic commission of non-bailable offences” then it was registered as criminal tribe under the **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871**.
- Next came the **Criminal Tribes Act (CTA), 1924**. Under this act, the local government may establish reformatory schools and separate criminal tribe children from their parents and guardians and place them in such schools.
- **Nomadic Tribes and Denotified Tribes** both are the ones that were regarded as **criminal tribes** under CTA. Most Denotified Tribes are spread across the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) categories.
- After the **Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Committee** (gave a comprehensive report on how CTA worked throughout India), the Act was repealed in 1949 and was replaced by the **Habitual Offenders Act, 1951**.
- In 2002, **Justice Venkatchaliah Commission** recommended for strengthening the programmes for economic and educational development of De-Notified Tribes (DNTs). It also recommended constituting a special commission to look into the needs and grievances of the DNTs.
- Consequently, a **National Commission for Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes** was constituted in 2005 under the chairmanship of **Balkrishna Sidke Renke**, to study the socio-economic conditions of these groups
- Another National Commission for Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic

Tribes chaired by **Bhiku Ramji Idate** was constituted in 2015 for a three-year period. It submitted its report viz “**Voices of the Denotified, Nomadic & Semi-Nomadic Tribes**” in 2018.

- In consonance with the recommendations of Idate Commission, the Union cabinet has approved a permanent Development and Welfare Board under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the purpose of implementing development and welfare programmes for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Communities.

Challenges Faced by DNT

- **Still face social apathy-** People of these communities continue to be stereotyped. A large number of them have been labeled ex-criminal tribes.
- **Face alienation and economic hardships-** Most of their traditional occupations such as snake charming, street acrobatics and performing with animals have been notified as criminal activity making it difficult for them to earn a livelihood.
- **Large scale Exclusions-** Many of the denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes are spread among SC/ST/OBC but are still not classified anywhere and have no access to socioeconomic benefits whether education, health, housing or otherwise. Also, there is a lack of data on these communities.
- **Poor Grievance Redressal-** Grievances of these groups include food, drinking water, sanitation, education, health, housing, poor infrastructure, etc. Many also complain about not getting caste certificates, not having ration cards, voter ID cards, aadhaar cards, etc.
- **Lack of Uniform Approach-** There are many anomalies in terms of identification of these communities, from state to state. There is a lack of awareness about these tribes and about authority looking after their

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook Twitter YouTube Telegram

Printed March 2020
Page 17/2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

grievances. Also, no permanent commission had been set up till now.

- **Declining Population-** As a result of all these problems many communities are facing decline in population.

Conclusion

A Committee under the Chairpersonship of Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog has also been setup. It will complete the process of identification of the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DNCs) that have not yet been formally classified.

Other Recommendations of National Commission for Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

under **Bhiku Ramji Idate**

- Since basic census data is not available on these tribes/communities there is a need to undertake a **socioeconomic survey**.
- The Centre should carve out sub-categories DNT- SC, DNTST and DNT-OBC, with dedicated sub- quota for them. While sub-categorisation of SCs and STs may prove complicated, it can be done immediately among the OBCs since the Centre has already formed a commission headed by Justice Rohini Kumar to sub-divide the central list of OBCs according to the developmental status of member communities.
- Seeking "destigmatisation" of denotified tribes, the panel has recommended that the Centre repeal the Habitual Offenders Act of 1952.

Defining Minorities In India

In The News

The Supreme Court recently asked the National Commission for Minorities to take a decision on a plea seeking guidelines for defining the term ‘minority’ and for their identification State-wise.

More on news

- The PIL sought minority status for Hindus in Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, J&K, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Punjab.
- It sought the following relief from SC
 - o Declare that Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act 1992 and NCM notification granting minority status to 5 religious communities is void according to Articles 14, 15 and 21, 29 and 30 of the Constitution of India;
 - o Direct the Government to define "Minorities" with the State being the unit of determination.

Minorities in India

- The Constitution of India uses the word ‘minority’ in various articles viz. **Article 29, 30, 350 A and 350 B.**
- It recognises minorities based on religion and language.
- But it **neither defines the term 'minority' nor delineates the criteria for determining a minority.**
- **As per sec 2(c) of the NCM Act 1992,** ‘minority’ means a community notified as such by the Central govt.
- Six religious communities, viz; Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified as minority communities by the Union Government.
 - o The six notified minorities constitute about 19% population of the country.
 - o The literacy rate among persons of age 15 years and above is highest for Christians, for both the sexes in rural and urban areas.
 - o The Labour Force Participation Rate

(LFPR) for male is much higher than female for all religious groups.

- o The unemployment rate in rural areas is less than that of urban areas. In rural areas, during 2009- 10, unemployment rate was the highest for Christians for both males (3 per cent) and females (6 per cent). In urban areas, unemployment rate was the highest for Sikhs for both males (6 per cent) and females (8 per cent).
- **States governments are also empowered to designate state minorities** and set up State Minority Commissions. For e.g. Jains were designated as minority by 11 states before they were nationally recognized in 2014.

Case for defining minorities state-wise

- **Increasing inequality:** Classification of religious minorities at a pan-India level has not only created a wave of inequality across different States but is also encouraging conversion to seek social, political and economic benefits available to minorities. The six notified minorities have various benefits at central level such as:
 - o Pursuant to Art 30, government interference in institutions and trusts of the community will cease to exist.
 - o 50% reservation from their community will be allowed in educational institutions run by them.
 - o They would be allowed to teach culture and religion in their institutions and seek government funding for land.
 - o They will be eligible to avail of exclusive schemes run by the ministry of minority affairs like Jiyo Parsi, Nai Roshini, Nai Manzil, Hamari Dharohar etc.
- **Exclusion of various sections:** Failure to identify and recognize minorities leads to unreasonable disbursement of minority benefits e.g. In J&K, Muslims are 68.30% but are considered a minority and hence get a lion's share of benefits. Similarly,

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Christians are a majority in Mizoram, Meghalaya and but they are treated as minority.

- **Similar provisions:** ‘Scheduled Castes’ and ‘Scheduled Tribes’ are identified at the State/UT level. In terms of Articles 341 and 342 the President is empowered to draw up a list in consultation with the Governor of each State subject to revision by Parliament.
- **Supreme court judgements: Supreme Court through its various judgements has tried to provide guidelines for defining minorities:**
 - o **Kerala Education Bill case 1958:** It said minority should to be a group of people who are numerically a minority in a ‘State as a whole’ as distinguished from any particular area or region’.
 - o **Bal Patil & others v UOI, 1999 and TMA Pai Foundation v State of Karnataka 2002:** It held that with regard to state law, the unit to determine a religious or linguistic minority should be the state.

date he assumes office.

- The central government presents its report to the parliament.

Functions

- evaluate the progress of the development of minorities under the Union and States;
- monitor the working of the safeguards provided in the Constitution and in laws enacted by Parliament and the State Legislatures;
- make recommendations for the effective implementation of safeguards for the protection of the interests of minorities by the Central Government or the State Governments;
- look into specific complaints regarding deprivation of rights and safeguards of the minorities and take up such matters with the appropriate authorities;
- cause studies to be undertaken into problems arising out of any discrimination against minorities and recommend measures for their removal;
- conduct studies, research and analysis on the issues relating to socio-economic and educational development of minorities;
- suggest appropriate measures in respect of any minority to be undertaken by the Central Government or the State Governments;
- make periodical or special reports to the Central Government on any matter pertaining to minorities and in particular difficulties confronted by them; and
- any other matter which may be referred to it by the Central Government.

Conclusion

The concept of minority in social context is intricate. There is no single definition of the term minority as acceptable to all, and free from criticism. However, there is a need is to lay down guidelines for their identification and to ensure that only those religious and linguistic groups, which are socially economically and politically non-dominant and numerically inferior, may enjoy rights and protections guaranteed under Articles 29-30.

About NCM

- It was set up under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- It is a **quasi-judicial body with powers of a civil court.**
- It consists of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and five Members to be nominated by the Central Government –all should be from Minority communities.
- The Chairperson and every Member shall hold office for a term of three years from the

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page PT 2020

GS - II

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Printed March 2019
Page 17/2019

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Falling Productivity Of Rajya Sabha

In The News

Rajya Sabha Chairman recently presented a “report to the people”, highlighting the below-par performance of the Upper House and need to hold legislatures accountable.

Highlights

- Since June 2014, the Rajya Sabha has held 18 sessions and 329 sittings and **passed 154 Bills** — which comes to **less than one Bill in two sittings**.
- The **legislative output** of the Rajya Sabha has been falling. In 2009-2014, it cleared 188 Bills and in 2004-09 it cleared 251 Bills.
- Since 2014, the Upper House has been **unable to function for 40% of its allotted time** due to disruptions.
- Out of 48 hours in the Budget session, the house functioned only for eight hours.

Relevance of Rajya Sabha

- **Permanent House:** Rajya Sabha is never dissolved. Hence it provides the nation leadership and stability in the times when Lok Sabha is not constituted. It also acts as a check against any abrupt changes in the composition of the Lower House.
- **Guard against populist measures:** While Lok Sabha may work under populist compulsions; Rajya being the permanent and less political house can take a deeper and non-populist look at bills and issues at hand. It also provides a second opinion on crucial issues of national interest.
- **Representation of States:** Rajya Sabha has representatives from State, hence interests of states are reflected and guarded by the Rajya Sabha.
- **Space for Experts:** Rajya Sabha provides a space for experts in their fields to voice their opinion on crucial legislative matters.
- **Sharing the legislative burden:** Legislatures, the world over, are grappling with increasing demand to legislate on newer areas. The Upper House thus becomes much more useful in sharing the

burden of the Lower House.

Criticism of Rajya Sabha

- **Reduced Significance:** On the matters of importance like the money bill and the budget, Rajya Sabha has little say which reduces its significance compared to Lok Sabha.
- **Chamber for political end seekers:** The Upper House has become a ground for party fund-raisers, those who lost in elections, crony capitalists, journalists, retired CEOs and civil servants.
- **Hindrance to speedy Legislation:** Given the competitive politics today, Rajya Sabha is also used by opposition parties to hinder speedy legislation, which is detrimental to the growth of the nation.
- **Frequent disruptions** in recent times is also undermining the deliberative and accountability functions of the upper house.

Way forward

- **Legislative Measures: Parliament (Enhancement of Productivity) Bill, 2017** should be taken up which seeks to fix the minimum number of days (100 days for Rajya Sabha) in which parliament shall be in session.
 - o National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) has also recommended the minimum number of working days to be 120 and 100 respectively for Lok sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- **Performance related pay:** There is also a call for linking salaries of legislators to their performance and attendance in Rajya Sabha.
- **Stricter Rules of Procedure and conduct of business** to deal with the unruly behavior – shouting, sloganeering of certain members so that time of the Rajya Sabha is not lost.
- **Reviewing the Anti-Defection Law** as it gives sweeping powers to the political parties. If the party decides to not let parliament function then MPs cannot

deviate from their decision even if they think differently.

- **Sustained Evaluation of performance** of our parliament and the MPs on regular intervals can be undertaken by Citizen's pressure groups to put pressure on MPs to perform and let parliament do its designated work.

ASPIRE IAS

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 2020
Page 17 2020

National Security Act

In The News

Recently, the Madhya Pradesh Government invoked the National Security Act (NSA) against three men accused of killing a cow.

About National Security Act, 1980

- - Acting in any manner prejudicial to the defence of India, the relations of India with foreign powers, or the security of India.
 - Regulating the continued presence of any foreigner in India or with a view to making arrangements for his expulsion from India
 - Acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State or from acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order or from acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community it is necessary so to do.
 - A detenu may be held for up to **three months** and in certain circumstances **six months**, without any review.
 - A **three person Advisory Board** made up of high court judges or persons qualified to be high court judges determines the legitimacy of any order made for longer than three months. If approved, a person may be held extra-judicially for **up to 12 months**. The term can be extended if the government finds fresh evidence.
 - The state government needs to be intimated that a person has been detained under the NSA.
 - It extends to the whole of India **except the State of Jammu and Kashmir**.

Concerns

- **Accused is denied basic rights available to others arrested in normal course such as-**
 - **Under Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)**

- ✓ The person arrested has to be informed of the grounds of arrest, and the right to bail. Under NSA, a person could be kept in the dark about the reasons for his arrest for up to five days, and in exceptional circumstances not later than 10 days.
- ✓ Even when providing the grounds for arrest, the government can withhold information which it considers to be against public interest to disclose.
- ✓ It further provides that a person has to be produced before a court within 24 hours of arrest.
 - **Article 22(1) of the Constitution-** an arrested person cannot be denied the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice. Under NSA, the arrested person is not entitled to the aid of any legal practitioner in any matter connected with the proceedings before the advisory board.
 - **Violates due process of law-** such as presumption of innocence
- **Over-reliance of governments on preventive detention-** In recent times, different State governments have invoked the stringent provisions of the NSA to detain citizens for questionable offences, which has brought the focus back on the potential abuse of the controversial law.
- **No figures available for the exact number of detentions under the NSA-** National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which collects and analyses crime data in the country, does not include cases under the NSA in its data as no FIRs are registered.
- **Against Constitutionalism** – as government's arbitrariness is not checked and is prone to misuse.
- **Can be used by the state to avoid other provisions of law-** Many provisions like imperil the defence of state, relations with foreign powers etc. are already punishable under several sections of the IPC. NSA allows the government to keep such

offenders in custody without charging them.

Arguments in favor of such a law

- **Presence of anti-national forces-** including terrorists, extremists, radical elements among others which threaten the unity and integrity of the nation.
- **Intelligence gathering-** Terrorists may use the provisions of innocence under the law to evade crucial details required immediately by the law enforcement agencies.
- **Misuse is not an excuse for repeal-** Mere allegation of misuse in particular cases should not undermine the efficacy in majority cases.
- **Application is a part of reasonable restriction-** provided under the Article 19 (2).

Way Forward

- There needs to be a balance drawn between security of the state and ensuring rights of the people.
- The law enforcement agencies must be sufficiently guided as to where the section must be imposed and where not. Standard Operating Guidelines must be put in place to ensure wrongful application of NSA does not take place.

Section 124-A Of The Indian Penal Code

In The News

A legal opinion was sought by the Union Government on a Law Commission report on the Sedition law (Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code).

Background

- The section 124A of Indian Penal Code is a pre-independence provision, which covers sedition charges against government.
- Various verdicts by Indian Judiciary have led to re- interpretation and re-examination of ‘sedition’ in light of Article 19 of the Constitution.
- There has been an effort to strike a balance between right to free speech and expression and power of State to impose reasonable restrictions (Article 19(2)).
- These verdicts have narrowed the ambit of ‘Sedition’ making its meaning more explicit, precise and unambiguous. Last year, the Law Commission submitted a “**consultation paper**” to the Centre saying the country did not want to be quoted as an example of one using such draconian laws
- In this regard, the Government is seeking views from various stakeholders including state government. Its dilution seems unlikely, as majority including law enforcement agencies, have expressed the need to retain the law without changes. Hence, the focus now is to check its misuse.

Arguments in favor of Section 124A

- **Not really a colonial law-** Now after the Supreme Court directions, its jurisdiction has been narrowed down. It can be applied only on grounds laid down by the court.
- **Application is a part of reasonable restrictions-** provided under the Article 19 (2)
- **Does not really curb free speech-** One can use any kind of strong language in criticism of the government without inviting sedition. However, such dissent should not be turned

into some kind of persuasion to break the country.

- **Threats to unity and integrity of nation** due to presence of anti-national elements and divisive Forces such as naxals, separatists who are receiving support from inside and outside the country.
- **Mere misuse cannot be a ground of repeal-** rather provisions should be made where such misuse is eliminated.

Argument against Section 124A

- **Against democratic norms-** It stifles the democratic and fundamental right of people to criticize the government.
- **Inadequate capacity of State Machinery -** The police might not have the “requisite” training to understand the consequences of imposing such a “stringent” provision.
- **Possibility of Misuse-** It has been used arbitrarily to curb dissent. In many cases the main targets have been writers, journalists, activists who question government policy and projects, and political dissenters.
- **The draconian nature of this law**—as the crime is non-bailable, non-cognisable and punishment can extend for life—it has a strong deterrent effect on dissent even if it is not used.
- **Used to gag press-** The press should be protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government.

Way Forward

- The guidelines of the SC must be incorporated in Section 124A as well by amendment to IPC so that any ambiguity is removed. A private member bill was introduced in 2015 to amend this section. The Bill suggested that only those actions/words that directly result in the use of violence or incitement to violence should be termed seditious.
- The state police must be sufficiently

guided as to where the section must be imposed and where not.

- Need to include provisions where the government can be penalized, if it misuses the section. This will ensure that section 124 A of IPC strikes a balance between security and smooth functioning of state with the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression.

ASPIRE IAS

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 2020
Page 17 2020

Judges And Post Retirement Positions

In The News

Recently, refusal of a post retirement job by a Supreme Court judge caused controversy.

Why the judges should accept post retirement jobs?

- **Legal knowledge:** The valuable experience and insights that judges acquire during their period of service cannot be wasted after retirement.
- **No bar:** Constitution doesn't bar them from accepting post retirement posts.
- **Statutes lay down conditions:** These posts are generally constitutional or of quasi-judicial bodies, whose laws more often than not mandate that only retired judges can occupy them.

Related information

- A report by Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy pointed out that as many as 70 out of 100 Supreme Court retired judges have taken up assignments in the many tribunals and commissions.
 - o Since 1950, there have been 44 Chief Justices of India who have accepted post-retirement jobs.
 - o More than 30 judges were appointed within one year of their retirement. About seven were appointed even before they retired.

Why judges should not accept?

- **Separation of powers and judicial independence:** Justice should not only be done, but seen to be done. Here, accepting and offering post retirement jobs bridges the constitutional distance which executive and judiciary needs to have, creating the perception of bias. This hampers judicial independence when positions are taken within a short time of retirement or accepted before retirement.
- **Conflict of interest-** Positions at tribunals and constitutional bodies create a conflict as Government itself is a litigant and appointment authority at the same time. The first Law Commission, headed by M C Setalvad, had recommended that judges of

the higher judiciary should not accept any government job after retirement.

- **Politicisation of judiciary:** The acceptance of post-retirement jobs leaves newly retired judges open to political criticism from the opposition, who use it to cast aspersions on the Court, the Judicial system, and the judgments and orders passed by these judges while in office.

What can be done to strike a balance?

- **Cooling off period:** Many have suggested that there should be a minimum cooling-off period of 2 years post retirement.
- **Increase age of retirement:** Unlike in many other countries, a judge of the higher judiciary in India retires at a comparatively young age and is capable of many more years of productive work.
- **Enact a law:** to set up a commission made up of a majority, if not exclusively, of retired judges to make appointments of competent retired judges to tribunals and judicial bodies. In the meantime, judges themselves can fill the legislative void by giving suitable directions.
- **Amend existing laws:** which mandate the appointment of retired judges in tribunals and other quasi-judicial bodies e.g. NHRC, NGT etc.
- **Envisioning a transparent process:** Former Chief Justice R M Lodha, had suggested that before a judge retires, the government should provide option of either being a pensioner or continue to draw existing salary. If they opt for pension, government jobs are out but if they opted for full salary, that name should be put in a panel. When a vacancy arises, these persons can be considered and the process becomes devoid of allegations of appeasement, favouritism etc.
- **Amending the constitution:** by incorporating a provision similar to Articles 148 (barring CAG from post retirement job) or 319 (similar provision for UPSC members).

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

In The News

Recently, U.S.A (and then Russia) suspended its obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

Background

- The erstwhile President of USSR Mikhail Gorbachev and American President Ronald Reagan signed a **Comprehensive intermediate-range missile elimination agreement** which culminated in the INF treaty in 1987.
- Since 2013, however, both Russia and America have accused each other of **violating terms of the treaty**.
- In October 2018, President Donald Trump announced his **intention to withdraw from the INF treaty**. What is the INF treaty?
- It is an **arms control treaty** between the United States and Russia under which both agreed not to develop, produce, possess or deploy any ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles that have a range between 500 and 5,500 km. It however exempted the air-launched and sea-based missile systems in the same range.
- It mandated agreeing parties to destroy all such existing weapons within three years of the signing of the treaty and also clarified that **each of the parties could withdraw from the treaty** with a six-month notice.
- It laid out a **comprehensive inspection protocol**, whereby each of the parties could inspect and monitor each other's' elimination process.
- In 1991 the treaty was expanded to include Russia and the successor states of the former USSR.
- However, it was a bilateral agreement between US and USSR which left the **other nuclear weapon powers free to develop ground based intermediate range forces**. Among various countries that have expanded their weapon power, since then, is China which is a major concern for the US.

Significance of the treaty

- It helped to address the fears of an **imminent nuclear war in Europe** during the cold war era while building some trust between Washington and Moscow and **contributed to the end of the Cold War**.
- In today's world **the risk of nuclear war**, especially through accident or misunderstanding, remains intolerably high. And with keeping a check on two of the biggest nuclear capable states the treaty held a place of significance.

Concerns for India

- It may lead to a renewed arms race.
- As the US conflict with Russia deepens, India's partnership with Russia and simultaneously USA on advanced military systems will come under increasing scrutiny and pressure.

ICJ On Decolonization Of Mauritius

In The News

International Court of Justice in an advisory opinion has said that Britain has to handover Chagos Archipelago to complete the process of decolonization of Mauritius.

About News

- British government has rejected the opinion as it said that ICJ has no jurisdiction to deliberate on this matter.
- According to Britain, the request for an advisory opinion by the Government of Mauritius circumvents a vital principle: that **a State is not obliged to have its bilateral disputes submitted for judicial settlement without its consent.**
- Mauritius has maintained that Britain's “unilateral” decision to ban the right of return of Chagossians (African Tribe) and to renew the lease for the US base on Diego Garcia, one of the Chagos Islands, breached international law.
- Mauritius proposed a resolution in UN General Assembly in 2016 to take Britain to the international court of justice in a dispute over sovereignty of the Chagos Islands. India supported it.

About International Court of Justice (ICJ)

- It is the principle judicial organ of the UN established in 1945 succeeding the **Permanent Court of Justice** (established under League of Nations).
- The Court may entertain two types of cases:
 - Contentious cases** - Legal disputes between States submitted to it by them. Only States (States Members of the United Nations and other States which have become parties to the Statute of the Court or which have accepted its jurisdiction under certain conditions) may be parties to contentious cases.
 - Advisory proceedings** - Requests for

advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by United Nations organs and specialized agencies. Contrary to judgments, the Court's advisory opinions are not binding.

- It has no jurisdiction to deal with applications from individuals, NGOs or private groups and it rules only on the rights and obligations of States.
- It comprises **15 Judges**, elected by United Nations General Assembly and Security Council for **9 year term**. **Five Judges** are elected **every 3 years** to ensure continuity.
- It is headquartered in Peace Palace, **Hague, Netherlands** and India is a founding member of the ICJ.

Importance of ICJ

- Impact on international credibility:** Its judgements has a moral pressure on the states because their acceptance or rejection has a bearing on the State's reputation regarding the respect for international law. This in turn affects the state's credibility when entering into any treaties or agreements. For eg – Pakistan could not ignore the preliminary order from ICJ preventing it from carrying out the execution of Kulbhushan Jadhav.
- Impact on international laws:** The advisory function of the court is an effective instrument of preventive diplomacy and can also make a substantial contribution to resolving existing disputes. For example: the ICJ was asked to provide an advisory opinion on Restrictions to the Genocide Convention case and the legality of the threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons case. These opinions have greatly contributed towards international humanitarian law and international environmental law.
- Contributions to Global Geography and State Sovereignty:** Data suggests that States that agree to take their disputes to ICJ are successful in finding a resolution. While several international courts exist, which deals with international disputes, none in particular specializes in geography and

sovereignty related issues. In this context, the ICJ through special agreements makes a significant contribution to International law.

- **Platform for the Weak:** A state that does not have economic and military standing or the capacity to influence outcomes in the international realm can still gain access to assistance from the ICJ.

Limitations of ICJ

- **Court composition:** The ICJ has a judicial panel composed of 15 judges, whose distribution is based on regions. The division of representation for 191 countries amongst fifteen judges is striking. Further, data suggests that 90% of the time judges vote in favour of their own country affecting the impartiality of the court. For e.g.- in the current Mauritius case, the only dissenting note was of an American judge.
- **Jurisdiction:** ICJ has limited jurisdiction as it only covers cases by ‘special agreement’ or cases authorised by a treaty or cases between the states that have declared themselves subject to the compulsory jurisdiction of the court.
- **Lack of Compliance and Enforcement:** The court itself does not have any direct powers to ensure implementation of its judgements. Further, the exclusive power of veto that the UNSC’s permanent five members have made enforcement of ICJ judgments difficult, and grants some states more influence over decisions than others. For example: in the case of Nicaragua v.s. The United States of America (1986), the ICJ decision was vetoed by the USA.

Geneva Convention 1949

In The News

Recently, Pakistan government was accused of violating Geneva Convention in treatment of Indian Airforce Pilot who crashed in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir region.

What is Geneva Convention?

- The **Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols** form the basis of modern international humanitarian law, setting out how **soldiers and civilians** should be treated during the war.
- Although they were adopted in 1949, to take account of the experiences of the Second World War, **the four Geneva Conventions** continue to apply to armed conflicts today.
- **Three additional protocols** were also adopted later on which expanded the rules.
- The **Conventions** have been **ratified by all States** and are universally applicable.
- Any nation that has ratified the Geneva Conventions but not the protocols is still bound by all provisions of the conventions.
- The provisions of the conventions **apply in peacetime situations, in declared wars, and in conflicts that are not recognised as war** by one or more of the parties.
- They contain stringent rules to deal with what are known as **"grave breaches"**.
- **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** has been mandated under the Geneva Conventions to ensure the application of international humanitarian law.

The four Geneva Conventions

- **Convention I:** This convention protects wounded and infirm soldiers from **torture, assaults** upon personal dignity, and execution without judgment. It also **grants the right to proper medical treatment** and care.
- **Convention II:** This extends the protections described above to **shipwrecked soldiers and other naval forces**, including special protections to hospital ships.

- **Convention III:** It defined **'Prisoner of War,'** and accorded them proper and humane treatment as specified by the first convention.
 - o It states that PoW have to be protected against insults and public curiosity as well as acts of violence or intimidation. In this context, Pakistan may have violated the treaties when their military spokesperson tweeted an image of the captured IAF pilot.
 - o ICRC describes "PoWs (as) usually members of the armed forces of one of the parties to a conflict who fall into the hands of the adverse party." ICRC visits prisoners, both military and civilian.
- **Convention IV:** Under this convention, **civilians are afforded the same protections.**

The protocols

- **Protocol I** expands protection for the civilian population as well as military and civilian medical workers in **international armed conflicts**. **Protocol II** elaborates on protections for victims caught up in **high-intensity internal conflicts** such as civil wars. It was the **first-ever** international treaty devoted exclusively to situations of non-international armed conflicts.
 - o It does not apply to internal disturbances such as riots, demonstrations and isolated acts of violence.

Third Additional Protocol: It provides for distinctive emblem- **the red crystal** - which has the same international status as the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems. People displaying any of these protective emblems are performing a humanitarian service and must be protected by all parties to the conflict.

International Red Cross and Red Cross Movement

- It is a humanitarian movement with approximately 17 million volunteers worldwide.
- It consists of various International and

National organizations with common objective but legally independent of each other.

- **International Committee of Red Cross:** Established in 1863, the ICRC operates worldwide, helping people affected by conflict and armed violence and promoting the laws that protect victims of war. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:** it was founded in 1919, it coordinates activities between 190 national red cross and red crescent societies worldwide.
- **National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:** Currently 190 are recognized by International Committee of Red Cross.
- The collective focus of the International Federation and its National Societies is on achieving the following four goals:
 - o Goal 1: Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
 - o Goal 2: Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
 - o Goal 3: Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
 - o Goal 4: Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Grave Breaches

- It involves any of the following acts, if committed against persons or property protected by the Convention:
 - o Willfully killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments,
 - o Willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health
 - o Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly.
- Those responsible for grave breaches must be sought, tried or extradited, whatever nationality they may hold.

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

India-Saudi Arabia Relations

In The News

Recently, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman visited India as a part of its 3-nation tour, including China and Pakistan.

Importance of Saudi Arabia

• Energy Security

- o Saudi Arabia is India's largest supplier of crude oil (~19% of the total import). India also sources ~32% of its LPG requirements from Saudi Arabia.
- o Recently, Saudi Arabian oil major ARAMCO (in partnership with ADNOC of UAE) has decided to partner in Ratnagiri Refinery and Petro-Chemical Project in Maharashtra, a Joint Venture of US\$ 44 billion billed as the world's biggest.

• Bilateral Trade & Investment

- o Total bilateral trade is around \$28 bn. India is 4th largest trading partner of Saudi Arabia and the 4th largest market for Saudi exports. Further, both have invested in FDI in each other countries in various sectors.
- o Both countries have also signed Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement and a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement in 2006.

• Rights of Indian Workers

- o Of the 11 million Indians working in West Asia, nearly 3 million are in Saudi Arabia.
- o India is the largest recipient of foreign remittances (upto \$11 bn annually) from the kingdom.

• Strategic Cooperation

- o The Delhi Declaration (2006) has laid a foundation of cooperation on terrorism while the Riyadh Declaration (2010) has raised the level of partnership to strategic partnership and diversified the relations to include space and energy cooperation.
- o Due to the recent global downturn, the oil prices have fallen and as a result, Saudi deficits are necessitating

diversification and movement beyond oil. This has created opportunities for India to strengthen its strategic presence and outreach in Saudi. E.g. cooperation in the domain of science and technology.

- o Being one of the major investors, Saudi Arabia can force Pakistan to abandon its anti-India foreign policy.

• Security relations

- o In recent years, bilateral ties had acquired a security dimension with both countries stepping up cooperation in counter-terrorism and intelligence-sharing.
- o Riyadh also extradited several terror suspects to India.

• Socio-cultural relations

- o India has the world's 3rd largest Muslim population (after Indonesia & Pakistan). Being the custodian of the two of Islam's holiest sites (Mecca & Medina), Saudi becomes important in India's strategic calculus.
- o Saudi Arabia facilitates Hajj Pilgrimage to more than 1,75,000 Indians every year.

Challenges in India-Saudi Arabia Relations

- **Saudi – Pakistan relation:** Pakistan is a “historical ally” of the Saudis. Saudi gains from mostly unbridled military and political support from Islamabad and Rawalpindi, while the latter gains from financial infusions into its economy emboldened by the common theological bridge between the two states.
- **Ideological support to terrorism:** Saudi money has been accused of funding Wahhabi Islamic groups around the world, which ultimately channel to terrorist groups acting against India & Iran. Many extremist outfits are inspired by the Wahhabi branch of Islam.
- **Saudi-Iran rivalry:** The sectarian rivalry is destabilizing West Asia and influencing West Asian geopolitics. Considering its economic interests in Iran, India needs to

walk on a tightrope balancing relations between the two countries.

- **Saudi Arabia’s aggressive foreign policy in West Asia:** It is doing great damage to regional stability, which is India’s most important goal in the region.
 - o In Syria, the Saudi support for the rebels has played a key role in destabilizing the regime, leading to the rise of the Islamic State.
 - o In Yemen, the war has unleashed chaos and a humanitarian catastrophe, creating conditions for radicalism to flourish.
- **Bilateral Issues:** The working conditions for the Indian blue collared labourers in Saudi Arabia have been a major bilateral concern. Restrictive visa & hiring policies, stringent labour laws, lack of human rights & absence of minimum wage provision has resulted into many cases of exploitation of Indian workers.
 - o During the visit of Indian PM in 2016, Saudi Arabia has announced several labour reforms such as a unified standard contract for domestic workers, security against abuse for female domestic workers, minimum wage, new format for labour categorization etc.

from regional fractures and conflicts would allow India to pursue its economic and geo-strategic aims in the region.

Way Forward

- As Saudi Arabia attempts to shed its ultra-conservative image and move towards a more open and moderate economy and society alike, **India is being seen as a major collaborator and market.**
- Saudi Arabia has identified India as one of the eight strategic partners with whom it intends to deepen partnership in areas of political engagement, security, trade and investment, and culture. As part of this engagement, the two sides are finalizing the **setting up of a Strategic Partnership Council** at the Ministerial level.
- India needs to **continue the balancing act in West Asia** that allows it to have good relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel alike, the three poles of power at loggerheads with each other in the region.
- At the same time, **maintaining distance**

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Legitimacy Of The Basic Structure

In The News

About the issues surrounding the basic structure, its applicability, relevance and credibility.

Origin:

Supreme Court ruled in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* that Parliament's power to amend the Constitution was not unlimited, that the Constitution's basic structure was infrangible.

Current issues:

- The common criticism is that the doctrine has *no basis in the Constitution's language. The phrase “basic structure”, it's argued, finds no mention anywhere in the Constitution.* This has come to the fore in response to the recently introduced *103rd Constitutional Amendment*, which provides for reservations based on economic criteria in government jobs and education.
- Its detractors also believe *the doctrine accords the judiciary a power to impose its philosophy over a democratically formed government*, resulting in something akin to what Union Minister Arun Jaitley once termed as a “*tyranny of the unelected*”.

The need for upholding basic structure ideals:

- Basic structure ideals cannot be ignored for not only is the basic structure canon legally legitimate, in that it is deeply rooted in the Constitution's text and history, but it also possesses substantial moral value, in that it strengthens democracy by limiting the power of a majoritarian government to undermine the Constitution's central ideals.

What happens if basic structure ideals are not protected?

- There is a danger of granting untrammelled power to the legislature. This meant that those laws, even when discriminatory, were immunised from challenge.

- Were Parliament's powers considered infinite, the parliamentary executive can be removed, fundamental rights can be abrogated, and, in effect, what is a sovereign democratic republic can be converted into a totalitarian regime.

Basis for the Basic Structure doctrine:

- Even if a legislature were bestowed with the widest of powers to amend the Constitution, its authority was always subject to a set of inherent constraints. Parliament was, after all, a creature of the Constitution. It could not, therefore, make changes that had the effect of overthrowing or obliterating the Constitution itself.
- *Article 368* grants Parliament the power to amend the Constitution, making it clear that on the exercise of that power “the Constitution shall stand amended”. Therefore, *if what has to remain after an amendment is “the Constitution”, naturally a change made under Article 368 cannot create a new constitution.*
- Hence, *for an amendment to be valid, the constitution that remains standing after such a change must be the Constitution of India; it must continue to possess, in its essence, those features that were foundational to it even at its conception.*

Conclusion:

- Therefore, the basic structure doctrine is grounded in the Constitution's text and history. It also performs an important democratic role in ensuring that majoritarian governments do not destroy the Constitution's essential character.
- It may well be the case that the basic structure doctrine is derived from the abstract. But that scarcely means it doesn't exist within the Constitution.

Reservations To Economically Weaker Sections And The Basic Structure

In The News

- A **10% reservation** in government jobs and educational institutions to the economically weaker sections (EWS) among the upper castes, or those who are not covered under any reservation plan has been announced.

What is basic structure doctrine?

- Starting from Sajjan Singh case in 1964, basic structure doctrine was evolved by the Supreme Court of India. It found a solid ground in Kesavananda Bharati case. As per the doctrine, the constitution of India has certain basic features which cannot be altered or abrogated.
- **The court did not define this, and only listed a few principles** — federalism, secularism, democracy — as being part of basic structure. Since then, the court has been adding new features to the concept of basic structure. In subsequent years, courts extended the doctrine even to ordinary legislation and executive actions.

How the latest reservation policy affects the basic structure of the constitution?

- It is said that the new law violates the basic structure of the constitution.

Following are the issues:

1. It violates the landmark **Mandal judgment capping reservations at 50%**.
2. The constitution talks about only **social backwardness** (Article 15(4) and Article 16(4)) and nothing about economic backwardness.
3. Moreover, the Constitution makes provisions for commissions to look into matters relating to implementation of constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Castes (Article 338), Scheduled Tribes (338A) and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (339), but **has not created any commission for the economically backward classes**.

Govt's defence:

- The 124th Amendment mentions **Article 46** in its statement and objects. Article 46, which is a non-justiciable Directive Principle, says that the state shall promote educational and economic interests of “weaker sections”, in particular SCs and STs, and protect them from “social injustices” and “all forms of exploitation”.

What lies ahead for the govt?

To determine this, the Supreme Court has to examine the principles on which **affirmative action is based**. As per M Nagaraj (2006), it would have to apply **two tests**.

- **One is the width test**, on the boundaries of the amending power. This would include examination of four issues — quantitative limitations such as violation of the 50% ceiling for all reservations taken together; (ii) exclusion of creamy layer or qualitative exclusion; (iii) compelling reasons such as backwardness of the economically weaker sections for whom this reservation has been made; (iv) that overall administrative efficiency is not obliterated by the new reservation.
- **The second test is called the identity test**, under which the Supreme Court will examine whether, after the amendment, there is any alteration in the identity of the Constitution. The amendment cannot change this.

Conclusion:

It is clear from the Constitution that reservation can be for a caste or a class. In fact, caste is a social class and cannot be for individuals; the latest move has made it for the individual.

Similarly, the government has to justify “compelling reasons” of going beyond the 50% limit. In some states, upper castes number less than 10% and this scheme may be difficult to justify as for 52% backward classes there is just 27% OBC reservation.

The Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill

In The News

The government has introduced **Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill** in Rajya Sabha to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 Autonomous Councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the northeastern region. The amendment will impact one crore tribal people in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Key facts:

1. The proposed amendments provide for ***elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grassroot level.***
2. The ***village councils*** will be empowered to prepare plans for economic development and social justice including those related to agriculture, land improvement, implementation of land reforms, minor irrigation, water management, animal husbandry, rural electrification, small scale industries and social forestry.
3. The ***Finance Commission*** will be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to them.
4. The ***Autonomous Councils*** now depend on grants from Central ministries and the State government for specific projects. At least one-third of the seats will be reserved for women in the village and municipal councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura after the amendment is approved.
5. ***The district and regional councils*** administer the areas under their jurisdiction. They can make laws on certain specified matters like land, forests, canal water, shifting cultivation, village administration, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, social customs and so on. But all such laws require the assent of the governor.
5. ***Village councils:*** The district and regional councils within their territorial jurisdictions can constitute village councils or courts for trial of suits and cases between the tribes. They hear appeals from them. The jurisdiction of high court over these suits and cases is specified by the governor.
6. ***Powers and functions:*** The district council can establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, ferries, fisheries, roads and so on in the district. It can also make regulations for the control of money lending and trading by non-tribals. But, such regulations require the assent of the governor. The district and regional councils are empowered to assess and collect land revenue and to impose certain specified taxes.

Key provisions:

1. ***The governor is empowered to organise and re-organise the autonomous districts.*** Thus, he can increase or decrease their areas or change their names or define their boundaries and so on.
2. If there are different tribes in an autonomous district, ***the governor can divide the district into several autonomous regions.***
3. ***Composition:*** Each autonomous district has a district council consisting of 30 members, of whom four are nominated by the governor and the remaining 26 are elected on the basis of adult franchise. The elected members hold office for a term of five years (unless the council is dissolved earlier) and nominated members hold office during the pleasure of the governor. Each autonomous region also has a separate regional council.
7. ***The acts of Parliament or the state legislature do not apply to autonomous districts and autonomous regions or apply with specified modifications and exceptions.***
8. ***The governor can appoint a commission to examine and report on any matter relating to the administration of the***

autonomous districts or regions. He may dissolve a district or regional council on the recommendation of the commission.

ASPIRE IAS

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 2020
Page 17 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016

In The News

The *Nagaland Assembly* has passed a resolution rejecting the contentious *Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016*.

Objectives:

1. The resolution denounced the proposed Bill stating that it cannot be implemented in Nagaland as it will impact the “unique history and status of the Nagas under the Constitution”.
2. The resolution also expressed solidarity with the States and communities of the Northeast in opposing the Bill, as it has the potential of “changing the demographic profile, which will be against the interest of indigenous tribes and can divest them of their constitutionally guaranteed political, cultural and economic rights”.

WHAT IS THE CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL 2016?

- The Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016 seeks to allow illegal migrants from certain minority communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan eligible for Indian citizenship. In other words, it amends the Citizenship Act of 1955.
- The Bill provides that the registration of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders may be cancelled if they violate any law.

WHAT DOES IT WANT?

1. The Citizenship Amendment Bill seeks to allow illegal migrants belonging to the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian religious communities coming from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan to not be imprisoned or deported.
2. It also appeals for the minimum years of residency in India to apply for citizenship to be lessened from at least 11 to six years for such migrants.
3. The Bill, however, does not extend to

illegal Muslim migrants. It also does not talk about other minority communities in the three neighbouring countries, such as Jews, Bahais etc.

Critics Views of Citizenship (Amendment) Bill of 2016:

- Critics say it violates the basic tenets of the Constitution.
- Here, illegal immigrants are distinguished on the basis of religion.
- It goes against the fundamental right to equality under Article 14.
- Article 14 applies equally to both citizens and foreigners.

What is the Citizenship Act 1955?

- *Under Article 9 of the Indian Constitution*, a person who voluntarily acquires citizenship of any other country is no longer an Indian citizen.
- *Citizenship by descent*: Persons born outside India on or after January 26, 1950, but before December 10, 1992, are citizens of India by descent if their father was a citizen of India at the time of their birth.
 - From December 3, 2004, onwards, persons born outside of India shall not be considered citizens of India unless their birth is registered at an Indian consulate within one year of the date of birth.
 - In Section 8 of the Citizenship Act 1955, if an adult makes a declaration of renunciation of Indian citizenship, he loses Indian citizenship.

Who is an illegal immigrant?

- According to the Citizenship Act (1955), an illegal immigrant is defined as a person who enters India without a valid passport or stays in the country after the expiry of the visa permit. Also, the immigrant who uses false documents for the immigration process.

What are the guidelines to become an Indian citizenship?

- Citizenship is granted to an individual by the government of the country when he/she complies with the legal formalities, so it's like a judicial concept.
- In India, the Citizenship Act, 1995 prescribes five ways of acquiring citizenship:
 1. Birth
 2. Descent
 3. Registration
 4. Naturalization
 5. Incorporation of the territory.

National Board For Wildlife (NBWL)

In The News

India's apex *National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)* has cleared 682 of the 687 projects (99.82%) that came up for scrutiny. Only five projects were rejected since August 2014.

About National Board for Wildlife:

1. It is a *“Statutory Organization” constituted under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.*
2. Its role is *“advisory” in nature* and advises the Central Government on framing policies and measures for conservation of wildlife in the country.
3. *Primary function of the Board is to promote the conservation and development of wildlife and forests.*
4. It has *power to review all wildlife-related matters and approve projects in and around national parks and sanctuaries.*
5. *No alternation of boundaries in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries can be done without approval of the NBWL.*
6. **Composition:** The NBWL is chaired by the Prime Minister. It has 47 members including the Prime Minister. Among these, 19 members are ex-officio members. Other members include three Members of Parliament

Supreme Court Orders Eviction Of 1.1 Mn Forest Families

In The News

The Supreme Court has asked the governments of 17 states to evict an estimated one million tribal and other households living in forests after their claims of the *right to live in forests were rejected under the Forest Rights Act*.

- The court has directed the Dehradun-based *Forest Survey of India* to submit a satellite-image based report on the encroachments removed.

What's the issue and what were the reasons for evacuation?

- About 11,72,931 (1.17 million) land ownership claims made by scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act have been rejected on various grounds, including absence of proof that the land was in their possession for at least three generations.
- *The law provides for giving land rights to those living on forest land for at least three generations before December 31, 2005.*

Criticisms:

- The Forest Rights Law itself has been criticised by both wildlife activists and those fighting for the rights of tribespeople and forest-dwellers, albeit for different reasons.
- The former believe *giving people rights to live in forests will eventually harm the forests themselves and also wildlife.*
- *The latter believe that the implementation of the law is far from perfect and that deficiencies in this have resulted in many valid claims being rejected by the states.* The latter also allege that the government didn't exactly put up an effective defence in the case, which was brought by wildlife NGOs and activists.

About Forest Rights Act (FRA):

- The act was passed in December 2006. *It deals with the rights of forest-dwelling communities over land and other resources.*

- The Act grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwelling communities, partially correcting the injustice caused by the forest laws.

Rights under the Act:

- **Title rights** – Ownership to land that is being farmed by tribals or forest dwellers subject to a maximum of 4 hectares; ownership is only for land that is actually being cultivated by the concerned family, meaning that no new lands are granted.
- **Use rights** – to minor forest produce (also including ownership), to grazing areas, to pastoralist routes, etc.
- **Relief and development rights** – to rehabilitation in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement; and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.
- **Forest management rights** – to protect forests and wildlife.

Eligibility:

- Eligibility to get rights under the Act is confined to those who “primarily reside in forests” and who depend on forests and forest land for a livelihood. Further, either the claimant must be a member of the Scheduled Tribes scheduled in that area or must have been residing in the forest for 75 years.

Process of recognition of rights:

1. The Act provides that the gram sabha, or village assembly, will initially pass a resolution recommending whose rights to which resources should be recognised.
2. This resolution is then screened and approved at the level of the sub-division (or taluka) and subsequently at the district level.
3. The screening committees consist of three government officials (Forest, Revenue and Tribal Welfare departments) and three elected members of the local body at that level. These committees also hear appeals.

Kerala Sets Up Drug Price Monitor

In The News

Kerala has become the first State to set up a price monitoring and research unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).

- **Background:** The move comes more than five years after the *National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)* proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories.

Composition:

- The State Health Secretary would be the Chairman of the society and the Drugs Controller would be its member secretary.
- Its members include a State government representative, representatives of private pharmaceutical companies, and those from consumer rights protection fora.
- The society would also have an executive committee headed by the Drugs Controller.

Functions:

- The new watchdog will offer technical help to the State Drug Controllers and the NPPA to monitor notified prices of medicines, detect violation of the provisions of the DPCO, look at price compliance, collect test samples of medicines, and collect and compile market-based data of scheduled as well as non-scheduled formulations.

Need:

- The suggestion to set up PMRUs was made against the backdrop of the lack of a field-level link between the NPPA and the State Drugs Controllers and State Drug Inspectors to monitor drug prices.
- Pharma companies have been accused of overcharging prices of drugs in the scheduled category fixed by the DPCO and those outside its ambit too.

Forest Rights Act, 2006

In The News:

The Odisha State Food Commission has again asked the State government to expedite implementation of the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**, that would help ensure food and nutritional security to the vulnerable section of society.

About Forest Rights Act (FRA):

- The act was passed in December 2006. It deals with the rights of forest-dwelling communities over land and other resources.
- The Act **grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwelling communities**, partially correcting the injustice caused by the forest laws.

Rights under the Act:

- **Title rights** – Ownership to land that is being farmed by tribals or forest dwellers subject to a maximum of 4 hectares; ownership is only for land that is actually being cultivated by the concerned family, meaning that no new lands are granted.
- **Use rights** – to minor forest produce (also including ownership), to grazing areas, to pastoralist routes, etc.
- **Relief and development rights** – to rehabilitation in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement; and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.
- **Forest management rights** – to protect forests and wildlife.

Eligibility:

- Eligibility to get rights under the Act is confined to those who “primarily reside in forests” and who depend on forests and forest land for a livelihood.
- Further, either the claimant must be a member of the Scheduled Tribes scheduled in that area or must have been residing in the forest for 75 years.

Process of recognition of rights:

1. The Act provides that the gram sabha, or

village assembly, will initially pass a resolution recommending whose rights to which resources should be recognised.

2. This resolution is then screened and approved at the level of the sub-division (or taluka) and subsequently at the district level.
3. The screening committees consist of three government officials (Forest, Revenue and Tribal Welfare departments) and three elected members of the local body at that level. These committees also hear appeals.

Kannadigas To Get Priority In Private Sector Jobs

In The News

Karnataka government has decided to amend the *Karnataka Industrial Employment (Standing Orders), Rules, 1961* to give primacy to Kannadigas in jobs under Group C and D category in the private sector.

Sarojini Mahishi report had recommended granting primacy for the Kannadigas in the private sector jobs.

- The government would be incorporating the provisions to withdraw government concessions to the firms on non-compliance.

Sarojini Mahishi Report:

- The Karnataka government had formed a committee headed by former union minister Sarojini Mahishi in 1983 to recommend job opportunities for Kannadigas in Karnataka.

The important recommendations of the committee included:

- 100 per cent reservation for Kannadigas in all state government departments and PSUs.
- 100 per cent reservation for Kannadigas for Group C and D jobs in Central government departments and PSUs.
- A minimum 80 per cent reservation for Kannadigas for Group B jobs in Central government departments and PSUs
- 65 per cent reservation for Kannadigas for Group A jobs in Central government departments and PSUs.
- All jobs in the private sector to be reserved for Kannadigas barring, if necessary, senior/skilled positions.

What's the basis for this move?

- **Competition from outsiders:** For at least over a decade, especially after Bangalore exploded on the national and global map as the most sought-after destination primarily for software development, it witnessed a huge population influx from all corners of India naturally upsetting the

local and migrant balance and causing social friction primarily owing to economic reasons.

- **With not enough jobs being created** and the poor spread of those that are getting created, the pressure on, and in, relatively better-performing states is growing.

Issues associated with this policy:

1. By arm-twisting the private sector into forcibly hiring Kannadigas irrespective of merit or qualification, *the indirect assumption seems to be that Kannadigas are incapable of finding jobs on their own merit or hard work.*
2. Even as the move will benefit the Kannadiga population, with 100% reservation, *the private sector could suffer a setback as it would hinder choosing the best candidates, irrespective of the linguistic background or domicile of the person, to comply with the rule.*
3. Also, once it is enforced, *there is no stopping other states from coming up with similar populist policies*, even for white-collar jobs where merit is paramount for productivity. This could mean greater informalisation of labour, which in turn means greater insecurity for the same workers whose interests the Karnataka government is purportedly protecting with the move.
4. It would also violate the landmark **Indra Sawhney judgment** of the Supreme Court which caps reservation “of any manner” at 50%.
5. The end result of industry *loss of confidence and business moving elsewhere* would, of course, be a decline in the economic well-being of the Kannadiga blue-collar workers the policy is supposed to protect.

National Commission For Safai Karmacharis

In The News

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for *Extension of tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis (NCSK)* beyond 31.3.2019 for three years.

Background:

- The NCSK was established in the year 1993 as per the provisions of the NCSK Act 1993 initially for the period upto 1997.
- Later the validity of the Act was initially extended upto 2002 and thereafter upto 2004. The NCSK Act ceased to have effect from 2004.
- After that the tenure of the NCSK has been extended as a non-statutory body from time to time. The tenure of the present Commission is upto 31.3.2019.

Role of NCSK:

1. Recommend to the Government regarding specific programmes for welfare of Safai Karmacharis, study and evaluate the existing welfare programmes for SafaiKarmacharis, investigate cases of specific grievances etc.
2. Also as per the provisions of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, the NCSK has been assigned the work to monitor the implementation of the Act, tender advice for its effective implementation to the Centre and State Governments and enquire into complaints regarding contravention/non-implementation of the provisions of the Act.

Major impact:

- The major beneficiaries of the proposal would be the Safai Karmacharis and persons engaged in manual scavenging in the country since the NCSK will work for their welfare and upliftment.
- Though the Government has taken many steps for the upliftment of the

SafaiKarmacharis, the deprivation suffered by them in socio-economic and educational terms is still far from being eliminated. Further the practice of manual scavenging is still prevalent in the country and its eradication continues to be an area of the highest priority for the Government.

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page PT 2020

National Commission For Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

In The News

Foundation Day of *National Commission for Scheduled Tribes* is being observed on 19th February, 2019. The Commission will be celebrating fifteen years on 19th February, 2019.

Background:

- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) was set up on 19th February, 2004 through Constitution (89th Amendment) Act.

NCST leadership award:

- On this occasion, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has also decided to institute a national award named as “*NCST Leadership Award*” which will be *conferred for significant and exemplary services towards Scheduled Tribes in the country*.
- The awards will be given in 3 categories i.e.* (i) Educational Institutions/ Universities, (ii) Public Sector Undertakings/Banks and (iii) Public Service rendered by an Individual, NGO or Civil Society.

About NCST:

- ✓ NCST was established by amending *Article 338 and inserting a new Article 338A in the Constitution through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003*.
- ✓ By this amendment, the erstwhile *National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes* was replaced by two separate Commissions namely- (i) the *National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)*, and (ii) the *National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)*.
- **Composition:** The term of office of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and each member is three years from the date of assumption of charge. The Chairperson has been given the rank of Union Cabinet Minister and the

Vice-Chairperson that of a Minister of State and other Members have the ranks of a Secretary to the Government of India.

- **Powers:** NCST is empowered to investigate and monitor matters relating to safeguards provided for STs under the Constitution or under other laws or under Govt. order. The Commission is also authorized to inquire into specific complaints relating to rights and safeguards of STs and to participate and advise in the Planning Process relating to socio-economic development of STs and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and States.
- **Report:** The commission submits its report to the President annually on the working of safeguards and measures required for effective implementation of Programmes/ Schemes relating to welfare and socio-economic development of STs.

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

VVPAT

In The News The Election Commission recently informed the Madras High Court that it had made it clear way back in 2017 that there shall be 100% use of the ***Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) system*** during the Lok Sabha election this year to gain voter confidence.

What are VVPAT machines?

- The Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail is a method that provides feedback to voters.
- It is an independent verification printer machine and is attached to electronic voting machines.
- It allows voters to verify if their vote has gone to the intended candidate.

How do VVPAT machines work?

- When a voter presses a button in the EVM, a paper slip is printed through the VVPAT.
- The slip contains the poll symbol and name of the candidate.
- It allows the voter to verify his/her choice. After being visible to the voter from a glass case in the VVPAT for seven seconds, the ballot slip will be cut and dropped into the drop box in the VVPAT machine and a beep will be heard.
- VVPAT machines can be accessed by polling officers only.
- VVPAT is a machine which dispenses a slip with the symbol of the party for which a person has voted for. The slip dropped in a box but the voter cannot take it home.

3. Operates under a Direct Recording Election system (DRE) which detects fraud and existent malfunctions.
4. Will ensure greater transparency in voting process.
5. Gives both the voters and political parties an assurance.

Advantages in VVPATs:

1. Enables to verify vote: Instant feedback to voter that vote polled has been allocated to the intended candidate.
2. Enables authorities to count the votes manually if there is a dispute in the electronically polled votes.

New Panel For Welfare Of Nomadic Communities

In The News

The Centre will form a welfare *panel for nomadic, semi-nomadic and de-notified communities*. Announced in Budget.

- A **Welfare Development Board** will also be set up under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to design and implement programmes for these hard-to-reach communities.

Key facts:

- The committee will be set up *under NITI Aayog* to complete the task of identifying de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities.
- The committee will follow up on the work of the *Renke Commission and the Idade Commission*.

Denotified and Nomadic Tribes:

The Denotified Tribes are *communities that were listed or notified as ‘born criminal’ by the British under a number of laws*. The term, ‘Denotified and Nomadic Tribes’, can be traced to the *Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871*.

- The colonial government notified nearly 200 tribal communities to be hereditary criminals, cementing their societal identity as outcasts and subjecting them to constant harassment by the administration.
- **Forest laws** that came into force from the mid-nineteenth century onwards deprived a large number of communities of their traditional rights of hunting and gathering. *The new laws criminalised their very source of livelihood when it practiced.*
- When the forests were cleared by the British for commercial use and forest communities asked to contribute to labour, some communities resisted and were declared ‘*criminal*’.
- The British thought that communities had lost their legitimate means of livelihood, they must have been living by indulging in criminal

activities due to arrival of road and railway networks. *After India gained Independence, these tribes were ‘de-notified’ from the list of Criminal Tribes.*

Idade commission Recommendations:

- Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes are *poorest of the poor, most marginalised and most downtrodden communities who are subject to social stigma, atrocity and exclusion*. Therefore, the commission has recommended giving protection to Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes the communities under the *Atrocities Act*.
- The government should *provide strong legal protections and constitutional safeguards*, including the extension of the Protection of Atrocities Act to the NT/ DNT/ SNT communities by creating *a separate Third schedule as Scheduled De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes*.
- Noting that all that the Centre has done so far are “symbolic reparations”, the Idade Commission advocated for release of 2011 caste census, which is yet to be made public, at least on the DT/ NT/ SNT community, so that policies can be made specifically for these communities.

Bill To Counter Exploitation By NRI Spouses

In The News

In a bid to counter growing incidents of exploitation of Indian women by NRI (Non Resident Indian) spouses, the government has introduced a Bill in the Rajya Sabha.

Highlights of the Bill:

- The Bill is *aimed at prevent victimisation of Indian nationals in fraudulent marriages.*
- The Bill will *create accountability and protect those who are trapped in fraudulent marriages and are abandoned by their spouses.*
- According to the new Bill, *a marriage between an NRI and an Indian citizen will have to be registered within 30 days from the date of marriage.*
- *Necessary legal provisions* have been created in the criminal code and the Passports Act, 1967, to initiate action against erring NRI spouses.

What necessitated this?

- The introduction of the Bill was necessitated by the Ministry of External Affairs due to numerous complaints received from Indian nationals, mostly women deserted or harassed by their Non-Resident Indian spouses.
- It is expected that the Bill will serve as a deterrent for NRI spouses, who use marriages as a tool of exploitation.

Bill To Amend Cinematograph Act

In The News

The union government has introduced a bill in the Rajya Sabha *to amend the Cinematograph Act and impose strict penalty to combat the menace of film piracy.*

Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2019:

1. The Bill seeks *to amend provisions of Cinematograph Act, 1952, in order to tackle film piracy* by including penal provisions for unauthorized camcording and duplication of films.
2. It *aims to check piracy*, particularly the release of pirated versions of films on the internet that causes huge losses to the film industry and the exchequer.
3. The bill proposes *to make film piracy offences punishable with imprisonment* of up to three years and fine that may extend to ₹10 lakh or both.
4. The proposed amendment states that any person, who without the written authorisation of the copyright owner, uses any recording device to make or transmit a copy of a film, or attempts to do so, or abet the making or transmission of such a copy, will be liable for such a punishment.

Significance and Expected Outcomes:

- The film industry has been demanding for a long time that the government consider amendments to the law preventing camcording and piracy.
- The proposed amendments would increase industry revenues, boost job creation, fulfil important objectives of India's National Intellectual Property policy. It will give relief against piracy and infringing content online.

Lawasia Human Rights Conference

In The News :

The first **LAWASIA Human Rights Conference** was organised by **LAWASIA**, in association with the Bar Association of India recently.

- The conference *aims to provide a unique opportunity for lawyers and associated professional members to exchange insights and expertise on topics of significant importance to all.*
- **Theme:** “State Power, Business and Human Rights: Contemporary Challenges”.
- *The conference explored a wide range of human rights issues of relevance in the Asia Pacific region.*

About LAWASIA:

1. It is a **regional association of lawyers, judges, jurists and legal organisations** and it advocates for the interests and concerns of the Asia Pacific legal profession.
2. It provides **a platform to promote the cross-jurisdictional exchange of legal knowledge**; as a voice of the legal profession; and as a conduit for encouraging adherence to mutually-held principles of the rule of law, professional integrity and the protection of human rights.

The Dispute Between Britain And Mauritius Over Chagos Islands

In The News

The UK should end its control of the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean “as rapidly as possible”, the UN’s highest court has said. The International Court of Justice said the islands were not lawfully separated from the former colony of Mauritius.

- The UK Foreign Office said: ***“This is an advisory opinion, not a judgment.”***

What’s the issue?

- Britain detached the Chagos Islands from Mauritius in 1965, three years before Mauritian independence. From 1967 to 1973, some 1,500 Chagos islanders were gradually forced to leave their homes so that the largest island, Diego Garcia, could be leased to the US for a strategic airbase. ***Today, Diego Garcia hosts a major US military base.***
- In 2016, after several judicial challenges, Britain extended Diego Garcia’s lease until 2036 and declared that the expelled islanders would not be allowed to go back. In 2017, Mauritius successfully petitioned the United Nations to seek an ICJ advisory opinion on the legality of the separation.
- Mauritius claims it was forced to give up the islands – now a British overseas territory – in 1965 in exchange for independence, which it gained in 1968.

Arguments by Mauritius:

- Mauritius argues it was illegal for Britain to break up its territory. It claims sovereignty over the archipelago and demands the right to resettle former residents.
- The crux of the Mauritian claim is ***the right of self-determination***. In its submission to the court, the Mauritian government claimed that the separation of the islands from Mauritius was in clear breach of ***UN resolution 1514***, also known as the ***Colonial Declaration***. Passed in 1960, ***it enshrined the right of self-determination for colonial peoples and specifically banned the breakup of colonies prior to independence***. This was intended to keep borders stable, and to prevent colonial powers from simply absorbing colonial territory into their overseas territory so as to retain their sovereignty.
- Yet in spite of this resolution, a number of states (including France and the UK) kept possession of parts of their former colonies following the decolonisation process.

Implications of this judgment:

- While ICJ advisory opinions are not binding, the ramifications of the opinion will be highly significant; an opinion in favour of Mauritius may strengthen their position in any future negotiations, as well as putting significant international pressure on the UK over the status of the territory.
- But what could be particularly critical is the decision’s impact on far broader issues of post-colonial sovereignty, and the legitimacy of colonial era independence arrangements.



National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 Awards

In The News

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to confer the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 Awards to the Winners.

Background:

- *National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 was celebrated on 12th January, 2019, on the occasion of National Youth Day.*
- *National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 Theme:* “Be The Voice of New India” and “Find solutions and contribute to policy”.
- **Eligibility:** Youth in the age bracket of 18-25 years are invited to participate in the District Youth Parliaments.
- **Significance:** The National Youth Parliament Festival will encourage the youth to engage with public issues, understand the common man’s point of view, form their opinion and express these in an articulate manner. Relevant and effective voices on the vision of New India would be captured and documented to make these available to policy makers and implementers to take it forward.
- *National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 has been jointly organised by National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) under the aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.*

- Nehru Yuva Kendras was established in 1972.
- Later in 1987 under Rajiv Gandhi Government it became Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, an autonomous organization under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

National Service Scheme (NSS):

- The National Service Scheme is an Indian government-sponsored public service program conducted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of India.
- The scheme was launched in Gandhiji’s Centenary year in 1969.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan recommended introduction of national service in the academic institutions on a voluntary basis with a view to developing healthy contacts between the students and teachers on the one hand and establishing a constructive linkage between the campus and the community on the other hand.

National Youth Day:

- *The National Youth Day (also called as Yuva Diwas) is observed on January 12 every year to commemorate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.*
- The main objective is to propagate the philosophy and the ideals of Swami Vivekananda.
- It became a mainstream celebration in India from 1985 onwards and observed on January 12 ever since.

Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan:

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Rajasthan Social Accountability Bill

In The News

In a first for India, Rajasthan government has prepared *the draft of Rajasthan Social Accountability Bill*

and has invited suggestions from the general public.

Objectives of the Bill:

1. To seek the accountability of public functionaries and authorities for timely delivery of goods and services.
2. To create democratic, decentralized and participative approach to enable wider public participation.
3. To Initiate monitoring of programmes and policies through community score cards, citizens report card and social audits.

Key provisions:

1. *The purview of bill* includes any entity or body, which is under the control of the government, governor and the high court of Rajasthan. Entity or the body set up by Central Government to function within the State of Rajasthan and partially or wholly providing public goods and services provided there is consent of the Central Government.
2. *It seeks to impose penalties and compensation and initiate departmental action* against the Grievance Redressal Officer (GRO) of the service delivery department for non-compliance. For example: If the local police have failed to deliver it duties, the onus is on the GRO.
3. *The Bill will also set up a grievance redressal mechanism* starting from village panchayats. The Bill included provisions for citizens' charter, public hearing, social audit and information and facilitation centres.

citizens to initiate enquiries rather than relying on the departmental enquires in the existing system.

What is social accountability?

- “Social accountability” refers to actions initiated by citizen groups to hold public officials, politicians, and service providers to account for their conduct and performance in terms of delivering services, improving people's welfare and protecting people's rights.

Four pillars of social accountability?

- The four pillars are: (1) organized and capable citizens groups; (2) an enabling environment, with government champions who are willing to engage; (3) cultural appropriateness; and, (4) access to information.

Significance of this law:

- This law will compliment RTI which is becoming far more challenging.
- The citizen centric law will enable

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Public Notice 2020
Public PT 2020

National Rural Economic Transformation Project

In The News

The Union Cabinet has approved the Implementation of an Externally Aided Project namely **National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** through loan assistance (IBRD Credit) from World Bank.

Benefits:

- The technical assistance provided by NRETP and the higher level interventions facilitated by the project will enhance the livelihoods promotion and access to finance and scale-up initiatives on digital finance and livelihood interventions.

Salient features:

- DAY-NRLM lays special emphasis on **targeting the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable communities and their financial inclusion.**
- **Innovative projects will be undertaken under NRETP** to pilot alternate channels of financial inclusion, creating value chains around rural products, introduce innovative models in livelihoods promotion and access to finance and scale-up initiatives on digital finance and livelihoods interventions.

Significance of DAY- NRLM:

- DAY-NRLM provides for mutually beneficial working relationship and formal platforms for consultations between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).
- NRLM has also developed activity map to facilitate convergence in different areas of interventions where NRLM institutions and PRIs could work together which has been disseminated to all state Rural Livelihood Missions.

‘Vision Zero’ Concept

In The News

International Vision Zero Conference to Promote Occupational Safety and Health is being held in Mumbai.

- The conference provides *a forum for promoting safety and health at work by exchanging knowledge, practices and experience.*
- *The Conference has been organized by Directorate General Factory Advice and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI), Ministry of Labour and Employment, German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), Germany in association with Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay and International Social Security Association – Manufacturing, Construction and Mining.*

What is ‘Vision Zero’ concept?

- The concept of Vision Zero is based on *four fundamental principles viz. life is non-negotiable, humans are fallible, tolerable limits are defined by human physical resistance, and people are entitled to safe transport and safe workplaces.*
- The Vision is based on principles of Controlling Risks, Ensuring Safety and Health in Machines, Equipment and Workplaces and Skill Upgradation of Workforce.

Way ahead:

- The concept of ‘Vision Zero’ is fast gaining international acceptance and is expected to leverage the efforts of the Government of India to raise the occupational safety and health standards in the country so as to improve the occupational safety and health situation.

GS - III

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Printed March 2019
Page 54 of 54

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

PROJECT 75-I

In The News

Recently the Defence Acquisition Council approved Indigenous construction of Six Project 75(I) submarines under strategic partnership model.

Details

- Project 75 India (P-75I) is follow-on of the Project 75 Kalvari-class submarines for the Indian Navy.
- Under this project, the Indian Navy intends to acquire six diesel-electric submarines, which will also feature advanced Air-independent propulsion (AIP) systems to enable them to stay submerged for longer duration and substantially increase their operational range.
- Six Scorpene-class submarines are currently being built under 'Project 75' of the Indian Navy.
- The submarines, designed by French firm Naval Group are being built by Mazagon Dock Limited in Mumbai.
- The first of these, INS Kalvari was commissioned in Dec 2017 and the second INS Khanderi is undergoing sea trials while the third INS Karanj is under construction.
- The P75I project is part of a 30-year submarine building plan that ends in 2030. According to this, India has to build 24 submarines — 18 conventional submarines and six nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs).

Strategic Partnership (SP) Model

- The SP model has four segments — submarines, single engine fighter aircraft, helicopters and armoured carriers/main battle tanks — which would be specifically opened up for the private sector.
- Under this policy an Indian private company would be selected in each segment which would tie up with shortlisted global Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) to manufacture the platforms in India under technology transfer.

- It was first suggested in 2015 by Dhirendra Singh Committee and was introduced by Defence Procurement Procedure 2016.
- A 49 per cent FDI cap has been kept for setting up ventures under this for the production of defence platforms and the companies have to be in control of Indian entities.

Potential Benefits

- The SP model, if implemented well, is likely to have a number of benefits for both the private sector and the larger Indian defence industry.
- The private sector would have the opportunity to participate in some big ticket contracts — estimated to be worth over two lakh crore rupees in the initial phase of execution — which were hitherto reserved for the DPSUs and OFs.
- The model would also go a long way in bridging the long-standing trust gap between the Indian private sector and Ministry of D, with the latter perceived to be friendlier toward public sector entities.
- Further private sector companies are expected to exploit their dynamism, competitiveness, profit orientation, and exposure to the civilian sector for efficient utilisation of the technology, manpower and infrastructure developed in the process.

Concerns

- There is a lack of institutional capacity, governance and policy and legal issues to realise it on the ground.
- Another is the long-term viability of SPs largely due to the privileged position enjoyed by public sector entities as govt. tends to award big contracts to the public sector.
- Private companies have opposed the clause that there should be only one strategic partner per military segment. Having too few companies could reduce competitiveness.

Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment Report

In The News

The Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development's (ICIMOD) “Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment” reveals that more than one-third of the glaciers in the region could retreat by 2100, even if the global temperature rise is capped at 1.5°C.

Key Findings of the Assessment Report w.r.t Glaciers

Hindu Kush-Himalaya-Karakoram Glaciers: Since the mid-18th century, glaciers in the extended HKH have been, on average, in retreat. Since the 1950s, only **reductions in glacier area (or shrinkage)** have been observed.

- **Area Changes**
 - o Since 1970s, nearly 15% of the glaciers in the HKH has disappeared. **Eastern Himalaya glaciers have tended to shrink faster** than glaciers in the central or western Himalaya.
 - o In contrast to the Himalayan glaciers, on average, **glacier areas in the Karakoram have not changed significantly**. Given the context of glacier retreat throughout the rest of the extended HKH region, this behaviour has been designated the ‘**Karakoram anomaly**’.
 - o **Area loss also leads to glacier fragmentation**; the number of glaciers in the Himalaya is reported to have increased over the past five decades.
 - o **Mass Changes:** Glaciers in the extended HKH show **mass loss since at least the 1970s**.
- **Glacier Projections**
 - o Glacier volumes are projected to decline by up to 90% through the 21st century **in response to decreased snowfall, increased snowline elevations, and longer melt seasons**.
 - o Even if warming can be limited to the ambitious target of +1.5 °C (Paris Climate Deal), this will lead to a 2.1°C

rise in the HKH region due to **elevation-dependent warming**. In such a scenario, the region will lose 36% of its glaciers, with more than half of glacier ice lost in the eastern Himalaya.

Impact of HKH Warming

- **River flows and water availability:** Melting glaciers will increase river flows, pushing up risks of high- altitude lakes bursting their banks causing floods (glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs)). From 2060s, however, river flows will decline.
- **On Western Disturbances:** These are also likely to see increased variability.
- **Drying Springs:** As per the report of the NITI Aayog, 30% of springs in the Indian Himalaya have dried up due to reasons including receding glaciers.
- **Impact on Monsoon:** The HKH region is also crucial as it controls the monsoon system – which South Asia relies on for most of its rainfall. Shifting monsoon patterns will lead to intense precipitation which would increase the risk of floods, landslides and soil erosion.
- It may also cause **sea level rise** with its own consequences.

Other Major Findings of the Assessment Report: The HKH mountains **provide two billion people a vital regional lifeline via water** for food (especially irrigation), water for energy (hydropower), and water for ecosystem services (riparian habitats, environmental flows, and rich and diverse cultural values).

- o **Global Warming and Climate Change:** The HKH have shown a **rising trend** of extreme warm events; a falling trend of extreme cold events; and a rising trend in extreme values and frequencies of temperature-based indices.
- o Climate change is further enhanced by **short-lived climate pollutants** such as black carbon, which is emitted in large quantities in regions upwind of the HKH (especially India and China).
- **Losing Biodiversity:** 70-80% of the region's original habitat has been lost and

that may increase to 80-87% by 2100. A quarter of endemic species in the Indian Himalayas alone could be wiped out by 2100.

- **Energy insecurity:** More than 80% of the rural population rely on traditional biomass fuels for cooking and about 400 million people still lack basic access to electricity. The hydropower potential of nearly 500 GW remains untapped.

Elevation-dependent warming (EDW)

- It is one of the expressions of global warming wherein there is an enhancement of warming rates with elevation.
- One of the possible reasons could be that reductions in mountain snow cover exposes the dark coloured earth beneath. This reduces the surface albedo and increases the absorbed solar radiation that can lead to elevation-dependent amplification of warming via the **snow albedo feedback (SAF)**.
- **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD):** It is a regional intergovernmental learning and knowledge sharing centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and

Pakistan – and based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

- o It supports regional transboundary programmes through partnerships with regional partner institutions, facilitate the exchange of experience, and serve as a regional knowledge hub.
- o It aims to strengthen networking among regional and global centres of excellence.
- o Overall, it is working to develop an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem to improve the living standards of mountain populations and to sustain vital ecosystem services for the billions of people living downstream, now and for the future.

- **The Hindu Kush Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme (HIMAP)** is a long-term, integrated science-policy initiative coordinated by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) that aims to promote enabling policies, sustainable solutions and more robust regional cooperation in the HKH region to sustain mountain environments and livelihoods.

MAY DAY IN THE WORLD'S THIRD POLE

Hindu Kush Himalayas, along with the Tien Shan mountains in Central Asia, represents the largest area of permanent ice cover outside the two poles of our globe, and is thus also referred to as the 'third pole'.

The Climate Prognosis		
Best Case Scenario	Limited Public Action	Business as Usual
If Emissions are:		
Slashed	Contained	Not Checked
1.5°C Global average surface warming	2°C Global average warming	4-5°C Global average warming
2.1°C temperature rise in Hindu Kush Himalaya	2.7°C temperature rise in Hindu Kush Himalaya	5-6°C temperature rise in Hindu Kush Himalaya
A third of ice lost by 2100	Half of the ice lost by 2100	At least 2/3 of ice lost by 2100

River Basin Population (in million)

580 Ganga | 268 Indus
68 Brahmaputra

Biodiversity

4 Global hotspots
35,000+ plant species | 200+ animal species

Overview of The Hindu Kush Himalaya

Total Area	4.2 Million Sq. km
Countries	Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh
Major River Basins	Amu Darya, Indus, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Ganga Salween, Tarim, Yangtze, Yellow River, Mekong

Estimated number of People at disaster risk in India
337.8 Million

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
f t y

Telegram
Pulse March 2020
Pulse PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

INDIAN SUNDARBANS -A WETLAND OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

In The News

India has designated Sundarban Reserve Forests as the wetlands of International Importance, making it the 27th site in India.

About Sundarbans

- The Indian Sunderbans, with 2,114 sq. km. of mangrove forests, comprise almost 43% of the mangrove cover in the country according to a 2017 Forest Survey of India report. It is the **largest tidal halophytic mangrove forest** in the world.
- It is located in delta region of **Padma, Meghna and Brahmaputra river basins**.
- Sundarbans has now become the **largest Ramsar Site** in India.
- The Sundarbans was made a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1987.
- They are the **only mangrove** habitat which supports a **significant population of tigers (Royal Bengal Tigers)**, and they have unique aquatic hunting skills.
- The Site is also home to a large number of rare and globally threatened species such as **the critically endangered northern river terrapin, the endangered Irrawaddy dolphin, and the endangered fishing cat**.
- **Threats to Conservation:** climate change, sea level rise, widespread construction, clearing of mangrove forests for fisheries, establishment of coal-based thermal power plant just a few kilometres north of the reserve forest in Bangladesh.

About Wetlands of International Importance

- It is declared under **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance**, an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- It was adopted in the **Iranian city of Ramsar** in 1971 and came into force in 1975.
- **Ramsar Sites** acquire a new national and international status.

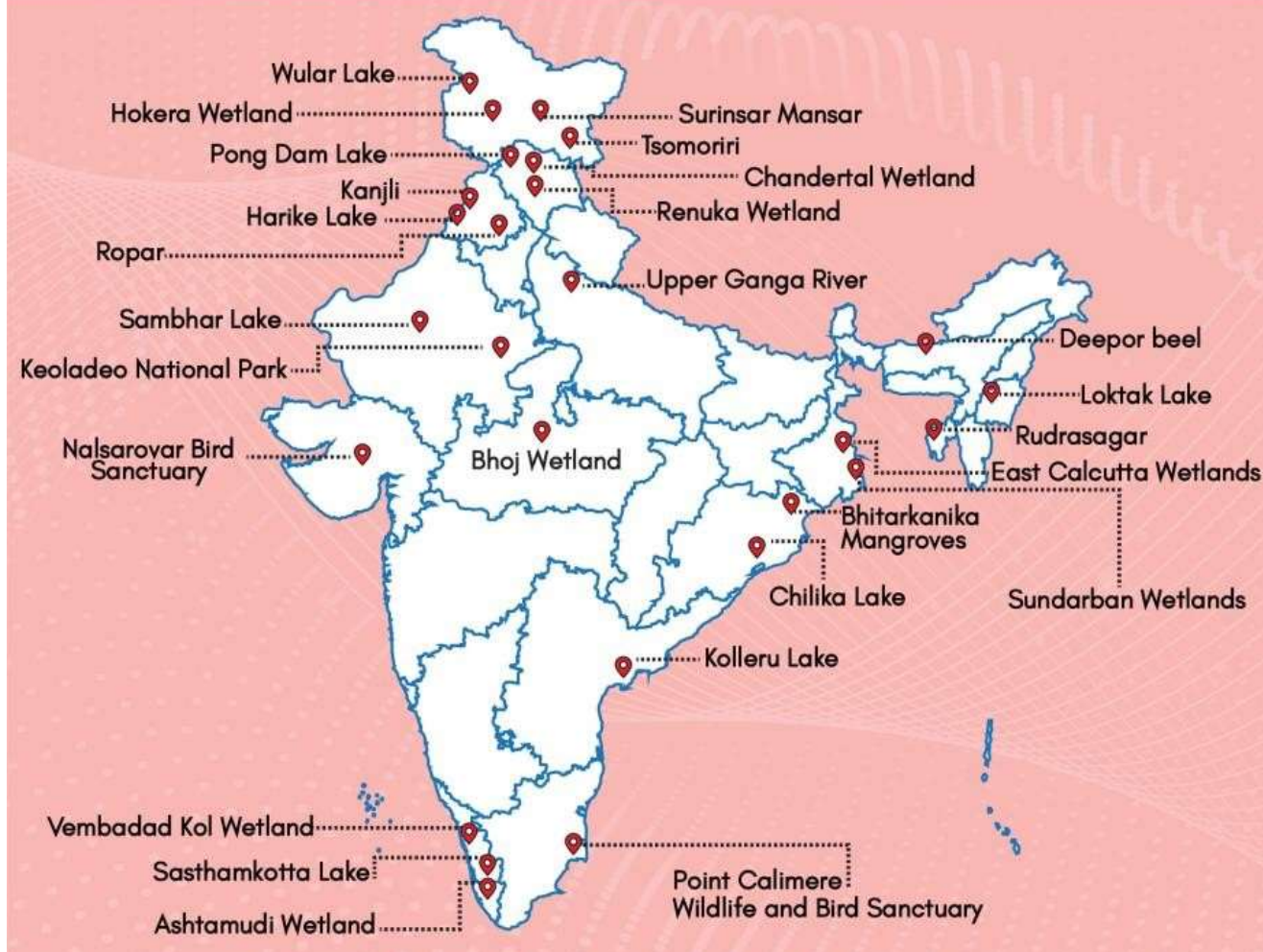
They are recognized as being of significant value not only for the country or the countries in which they are located, but for humanity as a whole.

- **Chillika lake** was designated the first Ramsar site in India in 1981.
- Some **criteria** for identifying Wetlands of International Importance include:
 - **Sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types**
 - **Sites of international importance for conserving biological diversity - Criteria based on species and ecological communities**
 - *Specific criteria based on waterbirds*
 - *Specific criteria based on fish etc.*

The Montreux Record

- It is a register of wetland sites on the **List of Wetlands of International Importance** where **changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur** as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.
- It is maintained as part of the **Ramsar List**.
- Sites from India included in this are **Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan and Loktak Lake, Manipur**.

RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA



Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Kelp Forests

In The News

According to a recent study, **Climate change** could lead to **decline of underwater kelp forests**.

About Kelps

- They are large brown algae seaweeds. They grow in "underwater forests" (kelp forests) in shallow oceans.
- Generally speaking, **kelps live further from the tropics** than coral reefs, mangrove forests, and warm-water seagrass beds.
 - Although kelp forests are unknown in tropical surface waters, a few species have been known to **occur exclusively in tropical deep waters**.
 - Kelps and coral reefs are composed of algae that grow in the shallow parts of the ocean in warm and sunny waters. However, kelp forest grows in nutrient-rich waters while corals can develop in low nutrient waters.
- The environmental **factors necessary for kelp to survive** include hard substrate (usually rock), high nutrients, clear shallow coastal waters and light.
- The productive kelp forests tend to be associated with areas of significant **oceanographic upwelling**.
- They are known for their **high growth rate**. Some varieties grow as fast as half a metre a day, ultimately reaching 30 to 80 metres.
- Kelp forests are recognized as one of the most **productive and dynamic ecosystems** on Earth. Smaller areas of anchored kelp are called **kelp beds**.

Importance of Kelp Forests

- They are **considered as Keystone Species** and their removal is likely to result in a relatively significant shift in the composition of the community and perhaps in the physical structure of the environment.
- It provides as an **important source of food** for many marine species. In some cases, up to 60% of carbon found in coastal invertebrates is attributable to kelp productivity. It may be

consumed directly or colonised by bacteria that in turn are preyed upon by consumers.

- Also, the rich fauna of mobile invertebrates in kelp beds makes this an important habitat in the diet of fish species. They provide a foraging habitat for birds due to the associated and diverse invertebrate and fish communities present.
- It increases productivity of the near shore ecosystem and dumps carbon into that ecosystem. Kelp primary production results in the **production of new biomass, detrital material** etc.
- It **slows down the flow of the water** which is important in situations where animals are spawning and releasing their larvae.
- They are **natural breakwaters** and **prevent coastal erosion**.
- They can **influence coastal oceanographic patterns** and provide many **ecosystem services**.
- It is an important source of **potash** and **iodine**. Many kelps produce **algin**, a complex carbohydrate useful in industries such as **tire manufacturing, ice-cream industry**.

Landscape-Level Approach To Address Human-Elephant Conflicts

In The News

A study involving close monitoring of elephants on daily basis for two years in Karnataka has concluded that landscape-level management is necessary for mitigating human-elephant conflicts.

Background

- **Rising human population has altered natural forest ecosystems to a greater extent.** There are large **coffee plantations, tea estates, monoculture plantations** have come up adjoining the ‘**Protected areas**’.
- Elephants tend to move across diverse habitats for feeding and breeding and often tend to venture these human-modified landscapes which ultimately lead to **human-animal conflict**.
- Researchers **tracked movement of elephants** across habitats and **collected GPS reading** during the wet and dry season of 2015 to 2017.
- There is a common belief that elephants specifically move towards agricultural lands in the dry season in search of water and forage.

What is Landscape-Level Approach?

- As per the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), Landscape level strategy deals with large-scale processes in an integrated and multidisciplinary manner, combining natural resources management with environmental and livelihood considerations.
- It can be used as a viable solution for minimising the Human-Elephant conflicts.

How the Landscape-Level Strategy helps in minimising Human- Elephant Conflict?

The ‘landscape approaches’ are increasingly seen as imperatives to protect ecosystems as well as reducing man-animal conflict. It involves:

- **Scientific management of Monoculture Plantations:** Since elephants prefer to stay in monoculture plantations (for example **monoculture plantations of Acacia, Eucalyptus**), forest departments should think strategically when to clear-fell these plantations. If these places are not available, elephants will start using **agriculture habitats** more frequently which may aggravate human-elephant conflict situation.
- **Regular Monitoring of land-use practices :** Proper planning needs to be done before making any change in the land –use practices in habitats such as coffee, agriculture or forest patches as it may have **negative effects on elephant conservation** or **aggravate human-elephant conflict**.
- **Preserving Forest remnants and monoculture refuges:** These refuges are vital for elephants and helpful in containing conflicts as most of the forest is fragmented.

Related news

The Asian Elephant Alliance has come together to secure 96 existing corridors used by elephants across 12 States in India by raising £20 million in the next 10 years.

Asian Elephant Alliance

- It was launched in July 2015 in **London, United Kingdom**.
- It is an **umbrella of five NGOs**-Elephant Family, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), IUCN Netherlands, World Land Trust (WLT) and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI).
- It aims to secure a safe future for the wild elephants of India, which make up approximately half of the world’s wild Asian elephants.

Cheetah Reintroduction

In The News

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has reported to the Supreme Court that African cheetahs, to be translocated in India from Namibia, will be kept at **Nauradehi wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh**

Background

- India has tried re-introduce Cheetah since early 2000s. However, Iran refused India's request to either clone Asiatic cheetah or transport live pair to India. Hence, it was decided to introduce African Cheetahs to India instead.
- Project Cheetah** was launched in 2009 and expert committee short listed some sites where Cheetah could be reintroduced. These were **Kuno-Palpur** and **Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary** in Madhya Pradesh, **Velavadar National Park** in Gujarat and the **Shahgarh bulge** in Rajasthan
- How Cheetah Re-introduction will help India?**
- Help restore dry land ecosystems-** as the cheetah is the **flagship species** of the grasslands, scrublands and open forests. Being a top carnivore, the cheetah is a **major evolutionary force** that shapes ecosystem functions.
- Enhances species diversity-** With great speed and dexterity, the cheetah is known for being an excellent hunter, its kills feeding many other animals in its ecosystem—ensuring that multiple species survive.
- Better control over livestock-** India is home to the world's largest free-roaming populations of livestock. Bringing back the cheetah will focus attention on pastoralism, and in doing so, help restore India's natural heritage.
- Boost ecotourism-** Enhance livelihood options and living conditions among the local communities where the cheetah is introduced.
- If successful, this project will make India the

only country in the world to host six of the world's eight large cats, including lions, tigers, jaguars, panthers and leopards.

Issues with the plan of Cheetah Re-introduction

- May harm the current species-** Some wild life experts are on the view that the introduction of African cheetah may act as an alien species to the native ecosystem, which might generate negative effects on indigenous wild life species.
- Lack of required habitat-** A cheetah requires a large area to support itself. India has very few natural grasslands left.
- Lack of prey base-** A cheetah's main prey in India in earlier times was the Indian Gazelle or Chinkara which is diminishing in number **due to ecological succession**.
- Human-Animal Conflict-** as humans have taken over grasslands and use them for agriculture.
- Rehabilitation of people-** many villages will have to be shifted to make sufficient space for Cheetah's habitat.

Way Forward

- Local communities should be counseled on living in harmony with wildlife.
- There is need to utilize global expertise, such as of **Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF)** in research and conservation of cheetahs. CCF is an international non-profit organization headquartered in Namibia and is internationally recognized center of excellence in the conservation of cheetahs and their ecosystems.

Indus Dolphin

In The News

Recently, the Government of Punjab declared the Indus Dolphin as Punjab’s ‘**State Aquatic Animal**’.

About Indus Dolphin

- **IUCN Conservation Status-** Endangered.
- **Features-** They are freshwater, and **functionally blind species** of dolphins which rely on echolocation to navigate communicate and hunt prey including prawns, catfish and carp.
- **Distribution-**
 - o Except for a tiny, isolated population of about 30 in **India’s Beas River** (185 km stretch between Talwara and Harike), Indus river dolphins live exclusively in the Indus river in Pakistan.
- The Punjab Government has stated that Indus river dolphin would be the key species for conservation of the Beas eco-system.

Threats faced by Indus Dolphin

- **Unintentional killing** through entanglement in fishing gears and over-exploitation of prey or Fisheries bycatch, mainly due to the widespread use of non-selective fishing gear.
- **Directed harvest** for meat and for dolphin oil which is used as a fish attractant and for medicinal purposes.
- **Water development projects** (e.g. water extraction and the construction of barrages, high dams, and embankments) have resulted into genetic isolation of dolphin populations.
- **River Pollution-** Punjab witnessed the worst ever contamination due to a molasses leak in the Beas.

The New Delhi Declaration On Asian Rhinos 2019

In The News

Recently, 2nd Asian Rhino Range Countries (i.e. **India, Nepal, Bhutan, Indonesia and Malaysia**) meeting, has signed- **The New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019**.

About the Declaration

- It intends to conserve and review the population of the Greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran rhinos (**three species of Asian Rhino**) every four years to reassess the need for joint actions to secure their future.
- The declaration outlines a series of strategic actions including **Trans-boundary collaboration** among India, Nepal, and Bhutan for one-horned rhino; engagement of the **local communities**; initiate proactive monitoring on potential adverse **impacts of climate change**; accelerate **natural and conservation breeding** of Sumatran rhino etc.

with the Bodo autonomous council as an active partner and supported by WWF- India. The aim is to increase the number of Rhinos and provide long term viability of the one-horned rhino population.

- **The government of Assam** has raised the **Special Rhino Protection Force** from people living in the fringe areas of the Kaziranga National Park.

Related Facts

- Javan and Sumatran rhinos are currently classified as critically endangered.
- The Sumatran rhino, the smallest of all rhino species and the **only Asian rhino with two horns**, became **extinct in the wild** in Malaysia.

The Great One-Horned Rhinoceros

- The great one-horned rhino or Indian Rhino is the largest of the rhino species found commonly in Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan and India.
- In India, it is found in Assam – Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Pobitora Reserve Forest, Orang National Park, Laokhowa Reserve Forest etc.
- It is listed as **Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List** and is protected under the Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act. It is threatened by poaching, habitat destruction, flooding etc.
- **Indian Rhino Vision 2020** – It has been implemented by Assam State Government

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page PT 2020

Low Carbon Strategy For Renewable Energy Integration

In The News

Recently NITI Aayog, International Energy Agency (IEA) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) released a report titled “**Low Carbon Strategy for Renewable Energy Integration**”.

Why do we need renewable Energy Integration?

- While economic, environmental and energy security concerns have been the key influencers for promotion and development of Renewable Energy sources, these sources are characterized by inherent issues like variability, intermittency etc. which impose a **threat on effective management of the system operation and management**.
- The **need to effectively integrate** such large-scale Renewable Energy in the Grid has been one of the key concerns for all stakeholders including the policy makers, planners and regulators.
- Currently, India’s power grid is one of the world’s largest operational synchronized networks with about **334 gigawatt (GW) of total installed capacity** of which **variable renewable energy capacity comprises 63 GW** (19.5 GW solar photovoltaic [PV] and 32.95 GW wind).

Challenges in integrating Variable Renewable Energy

- **Technical Challenges**
 - **Increasing flexibility of the Conventional Plants:** Current conventional sources are old and are technological incapable of responding to quick ramp up and back down emerging from fluctuations in RE generation.
 - **Forecasting and Scheduling:** Solar and wind are dependent on highly variable weather conditions and shall lead to high fluctuations in the power injected. Forecasting (both Load, RE generation as well as Net Load) is therefore essential for ensuring resource adequacy during operation and grid security. These fluctuations can only be predicted

fairly accurately up to a few days in advance and forecasts improve greatly if they are only for a few hours ahead.

- **Improved Market Operations:** As the renewable sources are concentrated in some of the States, adequate market operations and support services needs to be put in place which would encourage inter- state trading of the RE. Currently, there are significant barriers for such inter-state trading of RE including lack of reserve sharing between control areas / States, absence of products / markets for primary and secondary response for ancillary services, etc.
- **Lack of Regulatory and Policy framework:** The current market rules and regulations needs to be modified to achieve operational efficiency in system with increasing penetrations of variable RE. Electricity being a concurrent subject, limited initiatives have been undertaken at the State level. Not many states have undertaken adequate steps for aligning the state regulations with the central regulations.
- **Other Challenges:** They are more modular and are deployed in a much more **distributed fashion**. Unlike fossil fuels, wind and sunlight cannot be transported and locations with the best resources are frequently **at distance from load centres**.

Steps that needed to be taken for integration of renewable power within the synchronized Indian grid

- **Upgrading grid technology**
 - Ensuring effective scheduling and dispatch at the state level in all states and enhance power exchanges with neighboring states for better access of least cost generation.
 - Deploy sensors for real-time data on grid conditions coupled with sophisticated analytical tools to provide necessary information for grid operations.

- o Renewable generators to provide grid services such as Automatic Generation Control and operational data.
- **Upgrade grid operational protocols**
 - o Upgrade scheduling and dispatch to 5 minutes from current 15 minute basis.
 - o State regulators should upgrade their grid code to ensure renewable energy addition does not affect the grid and acknowledge attributes unique to renewable generators.
- **Improved market design and renewable energy procurement**
 - o Create model Power Purchase Agreement for renewable that move away from must-run status and employ alternative approaches to limit financial risk.
 - o Allow buying/selling of power at rapid speed at power exchange to manage sudden ramping up and down.
 - o Enable fair price discovery and compensation of flexible resource providers.
- **Promote flexible demand and balancing resources system with a high share of renewable require access to sufficient flexible resources**
 - o Create policy and regulatory incentives to access the full capabilities of existing coal, gas turbine, hydro and pumped storage generators.
 - o Improve the flexibility associated with conventional generating units to accommodate the variability and uncertainty of generation from renewables.
 - o Address integration issues on the distribution grid, including rooftop PV and utility-scale wind and solar that are connected to low-voltage lines.

Rainwater Harvesting In Metropolitan Cities

In The News

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Urban Development submitted its report on “**Rainwater Harvesting in Metropolitan Cities**”.

Need for Rain Water Harvesting

- **Increasing demand due to rapid Urbanization-** As per Census 2011, 37.7 cr people lives in urban population, which may grow to 57.5 cr by 2030. As a consequence of this phenomenon, water demand in urban areas is increasing rapidly.
- **Increasing Concretization in urban areas-** leading to less available space for water percolation and recharge in ground.
- **Inefficient use of water resources-** The rainfall on the surface tends to flow and as large as 85,565 MCM of surplus run-off can be harnessed to augment the ground water.
- **Over-dependency on Ground Water-** nearly 30% of urban water supply and 70% of rural water supply comes from groundwater.

Techniques of Rainwater Harvesting in Urban Areas- NITI Aayog has outlined the following techniques-

- **Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting-** A container needs to be constructed or placed beneath the roof level, which will store the rainwater intercepted and redirected towards it through pipes made out of wood, bamboo, or PVC.
- **Driveway Rain Off Harvesting-** This technique is useful where the built-up area is much larger, such as office complexes. The rain water is harvested by intercepting it with the help of a shallow gutter or a bump near the gate and directed to a recharge well.

Recommendations

- **Install Rain Water Harvesting Systems mandatorily-** in all Government and public premises such as done by West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

- **Launch a mega programme on Rain Water Harvesting-** on the analogy of ‘Swachh Bharat Mission’.
- **Greater compliance in environmental clearance-** where measures taken to ensure rain water harvesting should be ensured before giving any clearance.
- **Use of satellite technology for mapping of ground water for assessing water needs of urban towns.**
- **Stricter enforcement of laws relating to groundwater usage-** Currently, 70-80% of states have passed legislation for protecting water bodies and mandating rainwater harvesting as per the Niti Aayog.
- **Drafting a National Law for Rain Water Harvesting and on Storm Water.**
- **Need for use of the unutilized space in Nalas in various cities for rain water harvesting.**
- **Promotion of traditional practices of Roof Water Harvesting and simple technologies.**
- **Convert Rain Water Harvesting into a peoples’ movement in a big way-** such as the Ministry had organized ‘India Water Weeks’ in 2012, 2013 and 2015 to resolve water related issues and create awareness on ground. Similarly, **Jal Bachao, Vedio Banao, Puruskar Pao Campaign** have been undertaken.

Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN YOJANA

In The News

Recently Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN yojana.

Details of the scheme

- The scheme under the **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG)** will provide **financial support to Integrated Bioethanol Projects** using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock.
- 12 commercial scale and 10 demonstration scale Second Generation (2G) ethanol projects will be provided **viability gap funding support over the next six years** in two phases.
- It also seeks to increase Research & Development in this area.
- The ethanol produced by the scheme beneficiaries will be **mandatorily supplied to Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs)** to further enhance the blending percentage under Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme.
- **Centre for High Technology (CHT)**, a technical body under the aegis of MoP&NG, will be the implementation Agency for the scheme.

Benefits of the scheme

- **reducing import dependence** by way of substituting fossil fuels with Biofuels.
- **achieving the GHG emissions reduction targets** through progressive blending/substitution of fossil fuels.
- **addressing environment concerns** caused due to burning of biomass/ crop residues.
- **improving farmer income** by providing them remunerative income for their otherwise waste agriculture residues.
- **creating rural & urban employment opportunities** in 2G Ethanol projects and Biomass supply chain.
- **contributing to Swachh Bharat Mission** by supporting the aggregation of non-food biofuel feedstocks such as waste biomass

and urban waste.

Bio ethanol: It is an alcohol produced from fermentation of carbohydrate and cellulosic material of crops and other plants and grasses. It is generally used as an additive to increase octane number of fuel.

Generation of biofuels

- **First Generation Biofuels:** It uses the food crops like wheat and sugar for making ethanol and oil seeds for bio diesel by conventional method of fermentation.
- **Second Generation Biofuels:** It uses non-food crops and feedstock such as Wood, grass, seed crops, organic waste are used in fuel preparation.
- **Third Generation Biofuels:** It uses specially engineered Algae whose biomass is used to convert into biofuels. The greenhouse gas emission here will be low in comparison to others.
- **Fourth Generation Biofuels:** It aimed at not only producing sustainable energy but also a way of capturing and storing CO₂.

Lignocellulosic biomass: refers to plant biomass that is composed of cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin. Lignocellulosic materials including agricultural wastes, forestry residues, grasses and woody materials have great potential for bio- fuel production.

Ethanol blending in India

- Government had launched Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme in 2003, under which OMCs are to blend upto 10% of ethanol in Petrol.
- Despite govt efforts, the highest ever ethanol procurement stands around 150 crore litres during 2017-18 which is sufficient only for around 4.22% blending Pan India.
- Ethanol availability is constrained by procurement price variation, lack of distilleries, limited feedstock availability and lack of an integrated and dedicated supply chain.

Eviction Order Of Forest Dwellers

In The News

The Supreme Court recently stayed its previous order to evict forest dwellers in over 16 states.

Background

- A case was filed by various wildlife groups in the Supreme Court stating that all those Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers, whose claims over forest land were rejected under the 2006 Forest Rights Act should be evicted by state governments.
- Under the law, only notified scheduled tribes and traditional forest dwellers, in bona fide occupation of the land, are entitled to cultivate and occupy the lands.
- But over the years, several non-tribals and traditional forest dwellers had illegally occupied the forestlands, causing massive deforestation.
- On February 13, the Supreme Court ordered the forced eviction of nearly 1.89 million tribal and other forest-dwelling households from forestlands across 16 states.

Issues pertaining to rejection of claims under Forest Rights Act

- **Large number of cases in Left-Wing Extremism affected areas-** where tribal population is high. The forest land claims of these tribes and forest-dwellers are mostly rejected by the States owing to the security concerns.
- **Lack of awareness of forest dwellers-** Being poor and illiterate, living in remote areas, they do not know the appropriate procedure for filing claims.
- **Inadequacy of Gram Sabha-** The gram sabhas, which initiate the verification of their claims, are low on awareness of how to deal with them. More than half the rejections in Chhattisgarh were found to be at the gram sabha level.
- **Administrative Callousness-**
 - o In several states there have been reports on administrations

going particularly slow on even accepting community-level claims.

- o The district administration is expected to assist the gram sabhas by providing forest and revenue maps. But this hasn't taken place as expected.
- o In some cases, one-line orders are being passed without following the procedure.
- **Hasty Rejections-** A large number of cases are rejected due to lack of evidence or incomplete evidence. Officials demand tribals to furnish satellite imagery and non-existent 75-year-old records.

Other Illegalities done by authorities, which are alleged/ claimed by petitioners- such as

- o Raising of frivolous objections. E.g. the summons and notices issued to 60 Bhil tribals for encroaching on forest land in 2002 were used as evidence for evicting them under the Forest Rights Act, 2005.
- o Range officers are not authorised to reject FRA claims; they can only provide recommendations to claims committees. However, many cases are decided by forest guards or patwaris.

Way Forward

- There is need to **collate proper data** which accurately indicates the status of a claim.
- Any rejection order should be passed after **observance of due process of law**; compliance with principles of natural justice and whether appeal mechanisms have been properly exhausted.
- The administrative machinery should focus on **increasing the awareness** of tribals and aiding these groups in finding evidences, rather than ignoring them.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs should **coordinate this drive** and take help of other non-state actors such as the

Campaign for Survival and Dignity (CSD), a national organisation of several adivasi and forest dwellers’ movement.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006

- It provides for a rights-based, democratic and decentralised governance of forests.
- The rights granted under the act are:
 - o **Title rights** - i.e. ownership - to land that is being farmed by tribals or forest dwellers as on 13 December 2005, subject to a maximum of 4 hectares; ownership is only for land that is actually being cultivated by the concerned family as on that date, meaning that no new lands are granted.
 - o **Use rights** - to minor forest produce (also including ownership), to grazing areas, to pastoralist routes, etc.
 - o **Relief and development rights** - to rehabilitation in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement; and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.
 - o **Forest management rights** - to protect forests and wildlife.
- Eligibility to get rights under the Act is **confined to those who "primarily reside in forests"** and who depend on forests and forest land for a livelihood. Further, either the claimant must be a member of the Scheduled Tribes scheduled in that area or must have been residing in the forest for 75 years.
- The Act **provides that the gram sabha, or village assembly, will initially pass a resolution** recommending whose rights to which resources should be recognised.
- This resolution is then screened and approved at the level of the sub-division and subsequently at the district level.
- The screening committees consist of three government officials and three elected members of the local body at that level.

Environmental Rule Of Law

In The News

United Nations Environment Programme (UN) has released its first ever **global assessment of environmental laws** titled “**Environmental Rule of Law**”.

What is Environmental Rule of Law?

- The United Nations defines rule of law as having three related components –
 - law should be consistent with fundamental rights;
 - law should be inclusively developed and fairly effectuated;
 - law should bring forth accountability not just on paper, but in practice—such that the law becomes operative through observance of, or compliance with, the law.
- Environmental Rule of Law incorporates above components and applies them in environmental context.
- It is **emphatically multidimensional**. It cuts across many forms of law and norms—from social and customary norms of villages to statutory laws of nations to voluntary standards adopted by companies.
- Following the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (known as the Rio Earth Summit), many countries made a concerted effort to enact environmental laws.
- By the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the focus had shifted to implementation of environmental laws, which is where progress has waned.

Major Observations and Recommendations of the Report

- **Poor Implementation of Laws:** The world fares poorly on implementation of environmental laws and regulations despite the fact that 38 times more green laws have been framed and approved in the last four decades.
 - Policymakers can **evaluate the current mandates and administrative structure** of environmental institutions

to identify regulatory overlap or underlap.

- According to the report, we now have “treaty congestion”. World leaders have signed up to 500 internationally recognized agreements in the past 50 years. The **international community’s efforts** should focus on fostering improved implementation of environmental rule of law.
- Moving forward, there will be a need for a **regular global assessment** of the environmental rule of law and to track progress using consistent indicators.
- **Immature Institutions:** While laws and institutions addressing environmental issues have expanded, they are still maturing.
 - Investing in **information collection and management systems** is vital to building strong institutions.
 - **Engage with customary institutions:** Communities possess vast amounts of knowledge and have developed customs over centuries to manage natural resources.
- **People’s Participation:** Public and community groups need to be seen as critical stakeholders in environmental protection.
 - The governments can focus on **fostering a culture of civic engagement** through steps such as making information readily available on websites, collecting citizen monitoring data and complaints, responding to citizen inquiries with speed and efficiency etc.
- **Focus of environmental laws is more on environmental duties rather than rights:** A rights-based approach can strengthen environmental rule of law by elevating the importance of environmental protections.

The governments should **prioritize protection of environmental defenders** from harassment and attack and bring those who harm or threatened defenders to justice

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

swiftly and definitively.

- o Governments should **publicize the rights** available to the public and ensure a robust, free civil society able to help citizens actuate these rights
- **Understanding of Interlinkages:** Laws have best taken hold where countries have understood the linkages between the environment, economic growth, public health, social cohesion, and security.
- **Lack of Political Will:** There has been a lack of political will to implement these laws due to the potential impact on livelihoods, lands, properties and profits.

Small Grants Programme (SGP)

In The News

Recently, a workshop on MoEFCC-GEF, UNDP Small Grants Programme (SGP) was inaugurated in New Delhi.

of poor and marginalized communities.

Detail about SGP

- This program was launched alongside the **Rio Earth Summit** in 1992.
- This initiative provides direct **financial and technical support** to communities and Civil Society Organizations for various projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods.
- The program is funded by **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** and executed by the **United Nation Development Program (UNDP)**.
- The GEF UNDP/SGP program started in India from the year **1996-1997**. So far it has in India supported **331 projects** in various geographical locations across the country and in all five thematic areas of Climate Change, Conservation of Biodiversity, Land Degradation, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) & International Waters.
- In India the program is hosted through the **National Host Institution (NHI)** i.e. - **Centre for Environment Education (CEE)** as the responsible party for the GEF Small Grants Programme.

Centre for Environment Education

- It is a national level institution supported by Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India as a “**centre of excellence**”, and affiliated to the Nehru Foundation for Development, Ahmedabad.

Some Achievements of the Program

- 110,000 hectares of land brought under sustainable land and resource management in the Western Ghats, Himalayan Front and Arid and Semi-Arid Regions through sustainable measures such as organic farming and community managed enterprises for non-timber forest products etc.
- 85,000 MTs of CO₂ emissions reduced through a range of alternative energy and energy efficient technologies such as efficient cook stoves, solar driers, etc., which resulted in enhancing the livelihoods

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Repeated Earthquakes In Palghar

In The News

The Palghar district in northern Maharashtra **has been witnessing** an unusual frequency of earthquakes since November, 2018.

About News

- Palghar falls in **seismic zone III**.
 - Bureau of Indian Standards has grouped the country into four seismic zones, viz. Zone II, III, IV and V. Of these, Zone V is seismically the most active region, while zone II is the least.
- National Centre for Seismology (NCS) has categorized the unusual tremors as an ‘**earthquake swarm**’.
- Earthquake swarms can occur through the process of **Reservoir Induced Seismicity (RIS)** when large amount of seismic energy gets concentrated in a small area due the weight of the large structure and the water that it holds.
- However, scientists have ruled out a small reservoir nearby as the cause and have found no mining activity to explain the quakes.
- **Hydro-seismicity** is being hypothesized as the reason for swarms in peninsular India.
 - Water from heavy rainfall enters the small fractures in the rocks creating pressure between them.
 - With every 10 meter rise in groundwater, pore pressure increases by 1 bar. This pressure is released in the form of earthquake swarms.

2003 found that such activity was observed at 30 places in the region even though the Deccan Plateau is not an earthquake-prone zone.

- But earthquake swarms are not limited to the Peninsula. In 2016, a series of 58 earthquakes were recorded in the Rampur area of Himachal Pradesh. This Himalayan swarm was attributed to low strength of the earth’s crust in the area which could not hold the tectonic energy.
- The situation cannot be taken lightly as many major earthquakes in the region have been preceded by earthquake swarm activity. Two such instances were the Latur and Koyna earthquakes in 1993 and 1967 respectively.

Earthquake swarm

- It is a series of low magnitude earthquakes that occur in a localized region and over a period of time ranging from days, weeks to even months.
- When seismic energy piles up inside the Earth and is released in small amounts from certain points, such a series of earthquakes can occur.
- A Geological Survey of India (GSI) in

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Feeds Meena 2020
Feeds PT 2020

National Action Plan For Viral Hepatitis Control

In The News

Recently, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched National Action Plan for Viral Hepatitis.

About National Action Plan for Viral Hepatitis

- The Plan provides a strategic framework, based on which **National Viral Hepatitis Control Program** was launched in 2018 under National Health Mission.
- It is in line with the Government of India's deep commitment towards **elimination of viral hepatitis**.

About Hepatitis

- It is an **inflammation of the liver** often **cause by virus** and other **infections, toxic substances** (e.g. alcohol, certain drugs).
- There are **5 main hepatitis viruses**, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E.
 - o **Viral hepatitis types B and C** can cause **chronic** hepatitis and are responsible for 96% of overall hepatitis mortality while **Hepatitis A and E** usually cause **acute** hepatitis.
 - o **Hepatitis A and E** are typically caused by ingestion of **contaminated food or water**.
 - o **Hepatitis B, C and D** usually occur as a result of contact with **infected body fluids** such as during receiving blood, invasive medical procedures using contaminated equipment, transmission from mother to baby at birth, sexual contact etc.
 - o There are vaccines to prevent hepatitis A, B and E. However, **there is no vaccine for hepatitis C**.
 - o Also, **Hepatitis D virus (HDV)** infections occur **only** in those who are infected with **Hepatitis B Virus**.
- The infections can progress to **other health complications and liver cancers**.
- The challenge in eliminating chronic viral hepatitis is due to the **infected person being unaware of their chronic carrier status** and to the potential for them to continue to infect others for decades.

About National Viral Hepatitis Control Program

- Its goal is **ending viral hepatitis** as a public health threat in the country by **2030**.
- It aims to **reduce morbidity and mortality** due to viral hepatitis.
- The key strategies include:
 - o **Preventive and promotive interventions** with focus on awareness generation, safe injection practices and socio-cultural practices, sanitation and hygiene, safe drinking water supply, infection control and immunization
 - o **Co-ordination and collaboration** with different Ministries and departments
 - o **Promoting diagnosis and providing treatment** support for patients of hepatitis B & C
 - o **Building capacities at national, state, district levels and sub-district level up to Primary Health Centres (PHC) and health and wellness centres** such that the program can be scaled up till the lowest level of the healthcare facility in a phased manner.

Measles-Rubella

In The News

Recently, Global Measles and Rubella Update stated that India had 56,399 confirmed measles cases and 1,066 confirmed rubella cases in 2018.

About Measles-Rubella

- Measles and Rubella are **highly contagious viral diseases** that are spread by contact with an infected person **through coughing and sneezing**.
 - Measles **weakens the immune system** and opens the door to secondary health problems, such as pneumonia, blindness, diarrhoea etc. This virus is an exclusive human pathogen and has **no animal reservoirs or vectors**.
 - **Rubella**, also known as **German Measles**, is generally a mild disease but can have serious consequences for pregnant women and their children as it may cause congenital rubella syndrome in the foetus. India accounts for around one third of all children born worldwide with congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).
- Measles-rubella (MR) vaccine is given **at 9-12 months and 16-24 months of age** for preventing both measles and rubella diseases in the child as **no specific treatment is available** for the disease.
- To eliminate measles and control rubella, over 95% immunisation of children or strengthening of **Herd Immunity** is required.
 - It is a form of immunity that occurs when the vaccination of a significant portion of a population (or herd) provides a measure of protection for individuals who have not developed immunity.

Param Shivay

In The News

Recently PARAM Shivay, the first super computer designed & built under the National Supercomputing Mission by C-DAC (Center for Development of Advanced Computing) at IIT-BHU was launched.

About National Supercomputing Mission

- The Mission, launched in **2015**, envisages empowering our national academic and R&D institutions spread over the country by installing a vast supercomputing grid comprising of more than **70 high-performance computing facilities**.
- These supercomputers will also be networked on the **National Supercomputing grid** over the National Knowledge Network (NKN).
- The Mission would be implemented jointly by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY)** for over a period of seven years, through the **C-DAC and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**.
- The mission also includes development of highly **professional High Performance Computing (HPC) aware human resource** for meeting challenges of development of these applications.
 - **PARAM Shavak** is one such machine that has been deployed to provide training.
- **Application areas:** Climate Modelling, Computational Biology, Atomic Energy Simulations, National Security/ Defence Applications, Disaster Simulations and Management, Computational Material Science and Nanomaterials, Cyber Physical Systems, Big Data Analytics etc.

supercomputers twice a year.

- Currently, **China dominates** the list with 229 supercomputers, leading the second place (United States) by a record margin of 121.
- Since June 2018, the **American “Summit”** is the world's most powerful supercomputer, based on the **LINPACK benchmarks**.
- LINPACK benchmark are a measure of a system's floating point computer power. It measures how far a computer solves a nxn system of linear equations.
- **India has 4 supercomputers** in the Top-500 list of the world's top 500 supercomputers with **Pratyush and Mihir** being the fastest supercomputers in India.

About C-DAC

- It is the premier R&D organization of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for carrying out R&D in IT, Electronics and associated areas.
- **PARAM 8000**, first supercomputer of India, was built by CDAC.

Top-500 Project

- Started in 1993, it ranks the **500 most powerful non-distributed computers** in the world.
- It publishes an updated list of the

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Printed March 2020
Page FT 2020

Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)

In The News

Recently, DRDO successfully flight tested the second indigenously developed ‘**Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)**’ propulsion-based missile system, the first test of which was carried out in May 2018.

About SFDR

- SFDR is an **Indo-Russian R&D project** which has been established to develop a long-range air-to-air missile and a surface-to-air missile system in near future. It was started in 2013 to develop the technology and demonstrate it in 5 years.
- The **Defence Research Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad** is the lead agency for the collaborative mission project.
- At present, the conventional missiles use booster or sustainer configuration with solid or liquid propellants. They do not allow the missile enough energy to maintain its speed and tackle a maneuvering target.
- SFDR technology, based on the **ramjet propulsion system** depends only on its forward motion at supersonic speed to compress intake air and the engine flow-path components have no moving parts.
- Unlike solid rocket propellant whose formulation is approximately 20% fuel and 80% oxidizer, the solid ramjet fuel is **100% fuel and obtains oxidizer from air**, with the result being approximately **four times the specific impulse** (the product of thrust and time divided by propellant weight) as compared to solid rocket propellant.
- Hence, this **air breathing ramjet propulsion technology** helps propel the missile at high supersonic speeds (above Mach 2) for engaging targets at long ranges.
- Consequently, it has inherent simplicity, reliability, lightweight, and high-speed flight capability not possible with other air-breathing engines.

any turbines unlike the turbojet engines. It achieves compression of intake air just by the forward speed of the air vehicle.

- **Scramjet engine:** It is an improvement over the ramjet engine as it efficiently operates at hypersonic speeds and allows supersonic combustion. Thus it is known as Supersonic Combustion Ramjet, or Scramjet.

Differences between Ramjet and Scramjet

- **Ramjet:** A ramjet engine does not have

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Progress Of Digital Literacy Programs In India

In The News

Recently a report on review of National Digital Literacy Mission was laid in Parliament by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology.

About Digital Literacy

- As per the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Digital Literacy is defined as the ability of individuals and communities to understand and use digital technologies for meaningful actions within life situations. Any individual who can operate computer/laptop/tablet/smart phone and use other IT related tools is being considered as digitally literate.
- Digital Literacy holds important in areas such as using Government Schemes, Digital Payments, e- governance, Agriculture, Education, Health, Employment etc.

Current Status of Digital Literacy in India

- **Low Digital Literacy-** Among people in the age group of 14-29 years, only 18.3% were able to operate a computer in rural areas as compared to 48.9% in urban areas.
- **Ineffective usage of digital literacy-** An IIT-Delhi study found that while beneficiaries were now comfortable using social media, they were not as adept at browsing the internet for education opportunities and employment listings among others.

Background of Government Initiatives

- The Government of India launched the ‘**Digital India**’ campaign for transforming India into a digitally empowered society and economy.
- One of the goals of this campaign is to **empower those who are IT-illiterate** so that they are competent enough to use IT and related applications for effectively participating in the democratic processes and enhancing their livelihood opportunities.
- In this context, the Ministry of Electronics

and Information Technology initiated the **National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM)** as a means of realising the vision of ‘Digital India’.

- **Under the mission**, beneficiaries undergo a 20-hour training programme in using computers and other digital devices, browsing the Internet and sending and receiving emails.
- The original deadline for the National Digital Literacy Mission was 18 months but it was extended to 27 months before it was scrapped in June 2016. While the programme was still running, the government introduced the **Digital Saksharta Abhiyan, or DISHA**, in January 2015.
- Under these two schemes, a total of 53.67 lakh beneficiaries were trained, out of which around 42% were from rural India.
- In 2017, the government launched the **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan** by improving upon previous two schemes.

Issues with government schemes

- **Lack of Consolidation of Schemes-** Parallel schemes creates confusion in the minds of intended beneficiaries and makes the evaluation difficult.
- **Focus on quantitative parameters instead of quality of training-** There is inconsistency and variation in the findings of the independent studies with regard to data on various aspects such as usage of digital device, level of confidence etc. Further, there is no component of monitoring repeat transactions by individuals trained in NDLM, DISHA and PMGDISHA schemes to ensure that there is a behavioral change in the trainees and they continue to make use of digital/IT tools even after completion of their training.
- **Unrealistic data-** Under NDLM scheme, 16 out of total 36 States/UTs have

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook Twitter YouTube Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

achieved 100% certification of enrolled candidates. The committee found these to be unrealistic.

- **Duplication of beneficiaries-** The first impact assessment study, conducted by the research and advocacy group Council for Social Development, found that two-thirds of the beneficiaries of the scheme were not eligible for it.

Challenges in expanding Digital Literacy in India

- **Lack of awareness** about the benefits of digital literacy among the masses.
- **Lack of availability of requisite training infrastructure and resources at several places in the country** – As per National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 71st Round report on social consumption relating to education, the proportion of households in the country having computers during 2014 was around 14% (only 6% in rural households and 29% in urban households possessed computer).
- **Internet connectivity issues** as well as **Localization/Language issues** in rural areas.
- **Inadequate support from State Govt. & other stakeholders-** such as by North-Eastern states.
- **Insufficient financing for scheme-** Only Rs. 500 cr. released which is much less than allocated outlay.

to ensure that there is a positive behavioral change in successful trainees and they continue to use digital/IT tools even after completion of their training

- **Promote Digital Finance** through schemes like Digital Finance for Rural India: Creating Awareness and Access through Common Service Centres (CSCs), which was closed earlier.
- **Enhanced enrolment of training partners-** with proven expertise in IT domain so as to achieve the set targets.
- **Grievance redressal and feedback mechanism-** should be adequately strengthened to make the scheme equally accessible to all the beneficiaries and remove any element of discrimination.
- **Usage of low cost, easy to use** - such as feature/smart phones and associated apps, which are popular among masses in comparison to the conventional IT hardware and allied software. The content may be user-friendly and appropriate for all ages.
- **Focus on laggard States/UTs-** The good practices in some States may be replicated in other States and also the States which are very supportive and doing very well need to be incentivized so that there is visible impact.
- Close coordination amongst different Central/State agencies and entities

Recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee

- **Need for Long-term planning and perceptible outcomes-** should be the focus of government schemes, rather than having short-term parallel schemes with different names.
- **Change the criteria to increase coverage-** The current restriction of covering only one person per household in the existing schemes should be removed.
- **Need for qualitative impact assessment-** by focusing on qualitative parameters through continuous feedback mechanism and strengthening of monitoring mechanism

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

Cleaning Up Space Debris

In The News

As part of the space junk cleanup, a new device named **space harpoon** that captures junk has been tested successfully. It is part of the **RemoveDEBRIS project**, a multi-organization European effort to create and test methods of reducing space debris.

About Space Debris

- Space debris encompasses **both natural (meteoroid) and artificial (man-made) particles**. Meteoroids are in orbit about the sun, while most artificial debris is in orbit about the Earth. Hence, the latter is more commonly referred to as orbital debris.
- The term **Kessler syndrome** is associated with Space Debris, which is used to describe a self-sustaining cascading collision of space debris in LEO

Why Space Debris is a concern?

- **Obstruction to various space endeavors**
 - NASA estimates that there are about **500,000 pieces** of debris larger than half an inch across in low orbit, posing a potential danger to the 780-odd satellites operating in the area.
 - Space junk **travels at speeds up to 30,000 km an hour**, which turns tiny pieces of orbital debris into deadly shrapnel that can damage satellites, space shuttles, space stations and spacecraft with humans aboard.
- **Increase the cost of missions-** Various space agencies have to manoeuvre their space programme in light of increasing space debris thus adding to extra economic and human resource on space programme.
- **Debris is bound to increase-** Space-scientists concern about the inexpensive, tiny satellites called CubeSats, which are going to add space junk around 15% in next 10 years.

Initiatives taken towards Space Debris cleanup

- **Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and Inter-Agency Space**

Debris Coordination Committee

(IADC) advocates Global mitigation measures including preventing the creation of new debris, designing satellites to withstand impacts by small debris, and improving operational procedures such as using orbital regimes with less debris, and predicting and avoiding collisions. However, these guidelines are only voluntary in nature and there is no international treaty on space debris currently.

- **UK-** The Remove Debris mission is led by the Surrey Space Centre at the University of Surrey. UK and co-funded by various other partners from EU.
- **European Space Agency- e. Deorbit mission**, which would target an ESA-owned derelict satellite in low orbit, capture it, then safely burn it up in a controlled atmospheric reentry.
- **Japan-** It launched **Kounotori 6 satellite**, which uses a half mile long tether to remove some of the debris from Earth's orbit. The tether, made of aluminium strands and steel wire, is designed to slow the debris, pulling it out of orbit.
- **India-**
 - A team of ISRO and Physical Research Laboratory are working on setting up an observatory to track the space junk.
 - A multi-object tracking radar (MOTR) developed by the Satish Dhawan Space Centre allows ISRO to track 10 objects simultaneously. It tracks India's space assets and space debris, for which India was solely dependent on data provided by the US space agency NASA till early 2016

The Remove Debris Mission

The Remove Debris satellite platform will showcase four methods for release, capture and deorbit two space debris targets, called DebrisATS:

- **Net capture:** It involves a net that will be deployed at the target CubeSat.
- **Harpoon Capture:** Which will be launched

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

at a target plate made of “representative satellite panel materials”

- **Vision-based navigation:** Using cameras and LiDAR (light detection and ranging), the platform will send data about the debris back to the ground for processing.
- **De-orbiting process:** As it enters Earth’s atmosphere, the spacecraft will burn up, leaving no debris behind.

The mission will demonstrate key Active Debris Removal (ADR) technologies in orbit, which will have significance for future missions as well.

Space Harpoon

The harpoon is meant for larger targets, for example full-size satellites that have malfunctioned and are drifting from their orbit. A simple mass driver could knock them toward the Earth, but capturing them and controlling descent is a more controlled technique.

About Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee

- It is an international governmental forum for the worldwide coordination of activities related to the issues of man-made and natural debris in space.
- It aims to exchange information on space debris research activities between member space agencies, to facilitate opportunities for cooperation in space debris research, to review the progress of ongoing cooperative activities, and to identify debris mitigation options.
- ISRO is also a member of this committee.

Global IP Index

In The News

US Chamber of Commerce recently released its Global Intellectual Property Index.

Global IP Index 2019

- This is the **seventh edition** of the annual International IP Index which analyses the IP climate in 50 world economies, based on 45 indicators critical to an innovation-led economy.
- **India climbed up 8 places to reach 36** as opposed to 44 in the 2018 edition.
- Despite the improvement, certain **barriers** continue to exist such as barriers to licensing and technology transfer, strict registration requirements, limited framework for the protection of biopharmaceutical IP rights, patentability requirements outside international standards, etc.

Related News

- In order to “**Boost Intellectual Property culture**” in defence sector an **Intellectual Property Rights Facilitation (IPF) Cell** has been established under the Department of Defence Production to promote self-reliance in IPR in Defence Sector.
- Department also launched the “**Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti**” to encourage Defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and Ordnance Factory Board to boost “IPR culture” in their respective organization to promote self-reliance in defence sector.

Strategic Petroleum Reserve

In The News

Recently the Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) facility was operationalized.

About Strategic Oil Reserve

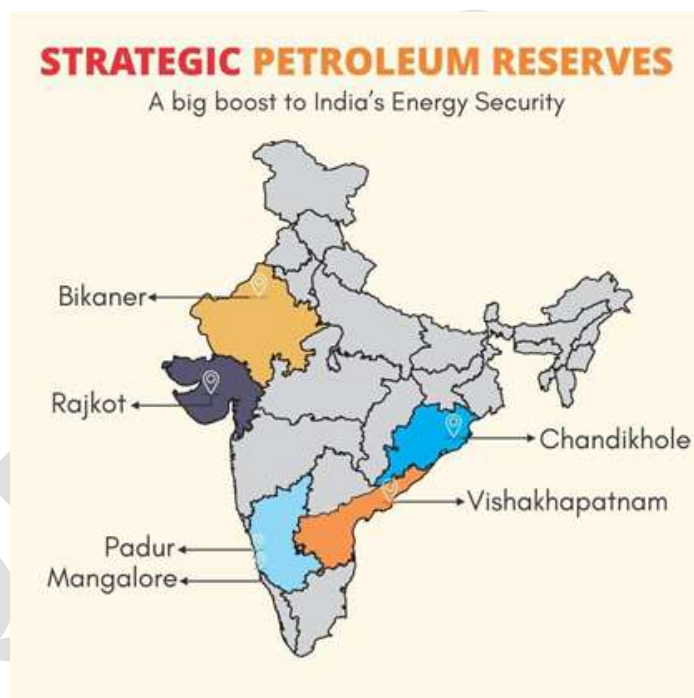
- It is a **storage of crude oil which would act as a cushion during any external supply disruptions** or supply demand mismatch shock.
- The global standard for strategic oil reserves, as set by International Energy Agency (IEA) and Integrated Energy Policy 2006 of India recommended that **country should maintain a reserve equivalent to 90 days of oil imports** for strategic- cum- buffer stock purposes.
- The crude oil storages are constructed in **underground rock caverns** and are located on the **East and West coast** of India.
- They are considered to be more **environment friendly** and incur less evaporation loss than ground level storage.
- Construction of storage facilities are maintained by **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited** (a special purpose vehicle of the Oil Industry Development Board under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas).
- Presently, strategic reserves are situated at Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), Mangalore (Karnataka), and Padur (Kerala).
- Moreover, project of three additional reserves is in pipeline at Chandikhol (Orissa), Bikaner (Rajasthan) and Rajkot (Gujrat).

International Energy Agency (IEA)

- It was founded in 1974 to help countries collectively respond to oil supply disruptions.
- It is an autonomous body within the OECD framework.
- Only the OECD member states can become members of the IEA.
- India is **not a member** but has joined IEA as an association country.
- It publishes the **World Energy Outlook**

(WEO).

- To become a member of the IEA, a country must have petroleum product reserves equivalent to 90 days of the previous year's net imports.



Pricing Of Drugs

In The News

Recently, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Chemical and Fertilizers submitted its report on the subject “Pricing of Drugs with special reference to Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013”.

Need for controlling the drug prices

- According to NSSO's 71st round survey (2014), around 72% in rural areas & 68% in urban areas of the total medical expenditure was incurred for purchasing medicines. Hence, the **affordability of medicines** is a crucial element in availing medical treatment by all sections of the people.
- Insurance covers only hospitalization bills and not the cost of drugs. More than **2/3rd of Out-of-Pocket expenditure is incurred on drugs**.
- There is a **lack of awareness among the public about the free supply** of drugs by the Government as well as generic drugs. There exists a nexus between medical practitioners, chemists & pharmaceutical companies.

Development of Price Control Regime in India

- Drugs (Price Control) Orders [DPCO] under **Essential Commodities Act 1955** aim to regulate the prices of bulk drugs and their formulations to make them more affordable.
- Initially, **Drug (Price Control) Orders** focussed primarily on limiting the overall profitability through **cost-based pricing**.
- **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy 2012** put in place a regulatory framework for pricing of drugs to ensure availability of essential medicines at reasonable prices even while providing sufficient opportunity for innovation & competition to support the growth of industry.
 - o National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy (NPPP) is the policy governing price control and DPCO is the order by which price control is enforced.
 - o NPPP was implemented through **Drugs (Prices Control) Order 2013 [DPCO 2013]**. The list of essential medicines,

along with dosages & strengths, are included in **Schedule-1** of DPCO & are subject to price ceilings.

- Under current mechanism, the Health Ministry draws up a **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)**. Under **NLEM 2015**, a total 376 drugs are under price control.
- On the basis of the NLEM, **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** fixes prices of formulations using the provisions of the DPCO and monitors its compliance.
 - o All essential medicines (as defined under NLEM) are treated as scheduled formulations (under DPCO-2013). However, it does not mean that all drugs brought under price control are essential medicines
- In addition, the following safeguards were provided in **Drug Price Control Order, 2013 to ensure effective control & regulation** in price movement of scheduled & non-scheduled medicines and availability of the essential medicines:
 - o The government has the power to bring any item of medical necessity under price control in public interest. This provision has been used to cap the prices of cardiac stents and knee implants.
 - o The manufacturers selling scheduled formulations below the ceiling price are to maintain the sub-ceiling price.
 - o The manufacturers proposing to produce a new combination/ strength/ dosage form of the Schedule 1 medicines need to take price approval before selling it.
 - o The manufacturers have to take permission of the Government before discontinuing the manufacture of essential medicines.
- It is pertinent to note that the **Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940** administered by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare do not contain any provisions for pricing of drugs.

Why market-based pricing mechanism was introduced in DPCO, 2013?

Prior to 2013, the DPCO followed a cost-based pricing mechanism that was based on the **costs involved in manufacturing a medicine along with reasonable profit margins**. But, such a mechanism suffers from following flaws:

- **Difficult to put a reasonable limit on the profit margin:** In Pharma industry, the process of discovering a new drug involves a long process of attrition, where hundreds of compounds might trickle down to one or two medicines. Thus, research & development of new drugs takes a lot of time and incur huge cost and must be appropriately incentivized.
- **Different cost of inputs:** The same drug can be manufactured by many companies of different scale and thus, will have different cost of inputs. It is difficult to maintain uniformity in cost-based calculation of price.
- **Problems in auditing cost:** Many companies don't divulge the actual costs incurred in the manufacturing process for competitive reasons. The process of verification may lead to intrusive inspector raj and increase red-tapism.

Thus, the government has decided to go for market based pricing to bring in more transparency and to encourage innovation and research in the field.

Prevailing issues in Drug Price Control regime in India

- **Reduced supply of essential drugs:** Price ceilings makes manufacturing of scheduled drugs unprofitable, so many pharmaceutical companies are moving to manufacture non-scheduled drugs especially smaller companies. This has dried up the supply side for many essential drugs. E.g.
 - o Supplies of Furoper (a life-saving drug for children with heart ailments) had come down by almost 40% after NPPA had imposed a price ceiling.
 - o Similar arguments have been raised against capping of prices of cardiac stents and knee implants.

- **Lack of control over non-essential drugs:** NPPA doesn't have pricing control in case of non-essential drugs, which comprise around 90% of domestic Pharma sales. Many drugs needed against life threatening diseases such as breast cancer are not included.
- **Nexus between Pharma companies and Hospitals:** Hospitals overcharge for treatment within their facilities, not allowing patients to source drugs independently from distributors. Pharma companies keep the retail price of drug high but offer huge cut to hospitals for prescribing their brands

Recommendations of the Committee

- **National Essential List of Medicines:**
 - o Every medicine is essential from the context of treating the disease for which it is formulated. The present nomenclature of NLEM is not appropriate and may be reviewed & suitably modified.
 - o Moreover, the existing list of essential & life-saving medicines must be enlarged.
 - o Also, permanent representation should be given to NPPA in the core committee on to review and revise the National List of essential Medicines (NLEM).
- **Market based pricing:** An expert committee should be constituted to study the impact of market based and cost based pricing systems on drug prices in the country.
 - o Many health experts suggest that cost based pricing would actually make the drugs cheaper.
- **Jan Aushadhi Stores:** More functional Jan Aushadhi stores should be opened in all districts and supply chain should be improved by appointing distributors and Carrying & Forwarding (C&F) agents. Awareness among people about **Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana** (PMBJP) scheme should be increased.
- **Generic Drugs:** Doctors should be advised to prescribe generic name of the drug

instead of the brand name.

- **Stringent Penal Provisions:** If the manufacturer does not refund the excess amount (charged above the ceiling price) within the prescribed time limit given by NPPA, cancellation of licenses of such companies may be considered. Similar action may also be taken on retailers who indulge in overcharging of drugs/medical devices.
- **Better Quality Control:** Adequate measures should be taken to considerably increase the number of samples of drugs to be tested to better identify and curb the sale/distribution of spurious/non-standard quality drugs. There is also urgent need for time bound decision on the prosecutions launched against manufacture, sale and distribution of spurious/non-standard quality drugs.
- **Composition of NPPA:** The current composition of NPPA needs to be expanded to include more full time expert members so that administrative efficiency of the organization is enhanced.

International Financial Services Center Authority Bill

In The News

The Union Cabinet has approved the **International Financial Services Centres (IFSC) Authority Bill, 2019**.

What is an IFSC?

- SEZ act provides for the establishment of an IFSC in India within an SEZ in India and enables the Central Government to regulate IFSC activities.
- Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Co. Ltd (GIFT) is being developed as the country's first IFSC.
- IFSC has been designated for all practical purposes as a 'deemed foreign territory' which would have the same ecosystem as other offshore locations, but which is physically on Indian soil.
- Any financial institution (or its branch) set up in the IFSC is
 - treated as a non-resident Indian located outside India;
 - expected to conduct business in such foreign currency and with such entities, whether resident or non-resident, as the Regulatory Authority may determine;
 - Nothing contained in any other regulations shall apply to a unit located in IFSC, subject to certain provisions.
- Some of its major services include:
 - Fund-raising services for individuals, corporations and governments
 - Asset management and global portfolio diversification undertaken by pension funds, insurance companies and mutual fund
 - Wealth management
 - Global tax management and cross-border tax liability optimization
 - Risk management operations such as insurance and reinsurance
 - Merger and acquisition activities among trans-national corporations etc.

insurance sectors in IFSCs are regulated by multiple regulators — the RBI, SEBI and IRDAI, respectively. However, the dynamic nature of business in the IFSCs necessitates a high degree of inter-regulatory coordination.

- The establishment of a unified financial regulator for IFSCs will result in providing world-class regulatory environment to market participants and providing a stimulus for further development of IFSCs in India.

Highlights of the Bill

- **International Financial Services Centres Authority:** It provides for the establishment of an authority to develop and regulate the financial services market in the International Financial Services Centres set up under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005.
- **Composition of Authority:** It will consist of **nine members** appointed by the central government - **Chairperson**; four members to be **nominated from RBI, SEBI, IRDAI and PFRDA**; two members from amongst officials of the **Ministry of Finance**; two members to be appointed on the recommendation of a **Selection Committee**.
- **Functions:** Its major functions include Regulating financial products, financial services, and financial institutions in an IFSC.
- **Transaction in foreign currency:** As per the Bill, all transactions of financial services in IFSCs will be in such foreign currency as specified by the Authority, in consultation with the central government.
- **Setting up an International Financial Services Centres Authority Fund:** All grants, fees and charges received by the Authority and all sums received by the Authority from various sources, as decided by the central government will be credited to this Fund.

Need for the Bill

- Currently, banking, capital markets and

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t y

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Department For Promotion Of Industry And Internal Trade (DPIIT)

In The News

The **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)** has been renamed as the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** with a mandate to deal with matters related to start-ups, facilitating ease of doing business among others.

Details

- DIPP (under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry) was established in 1995 and reconstituted in the year 2000 with the merger of the Department of Industrial Development.
- It looked after external trade earlier and there were demands by various bodies to create a separate ministry of Internal Trade.
- The matters related to internal trade were under the domain of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs**.
- With this decision, now the Department will also look over the subject of **internal trade** including retail trade, welfare of traders and their employees etc.
- Hence, with this **both internal and external trade have come under the same ministry i.e. Ministry of Commerce and Industry, through this department**.
- Other functions of this body include:
 - o Formulation of industrial policy and strategies
 - o Monitoring of industrial growth
 - o Formulation of FDI policy and its regulation
 - o Formulation of policies relating to various IPRs
 - o Coordinates with UN Industrial Development Organization
 - o Administers Laws namely- The Explosives Act, 1884; The Salt Cess Act, 1953; The Patent Act, 1970; The Boilers Act, 1923 etc.

Public Sector Undertaking

In The News

Recently, The Public Enterprises Survey of 2017-18 highlighted the performance of all the Central Public Sector Enterprises.

Performance of CPSEs/PSEs

- In 2017-18, the number of profitable public sector enterprises (PSEs) stood at 184.
- The profit of **top 10** most profitable firms in 2017-18 amounted to **61.8% of the profit** made by the profitable PSEs. This means that many PSEs are barely making money to justify the capital invested in them.
- The oil companies followed by coal companies formed the major chunk of the profit.

Issues faced by PSUs

- **Lack of Professional Management:** It has been highlighted that top decision making or chief executive officers in various **PSUs lack domain expertise**. Moreover, culture of Ad-hocism reduces the functional credibility of PSU.
- **Inadequate Autonomy:** There is frequent political interference in day-to-day administration of PSUs, reducing its status to that of a government department.
- **Over-Governance:** Majority of PSUs suffers from over-governance, because of constant pressure of accountability, scrutiny, expansion of RTI act. This promotes conservative, cautious and risk averse organisational culture.
- **Poor Human Resource Management:** There is problem of overstaffing, inefficient training, promotion and transfer policy which results into high rate of labour turnover and promoted absenteeism.
- **Less competitive:** It is being noticed that various PSUs are making profit in a limited competitive environment e.g. until 2005-2006 BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited) was second most profitable PSE, but with the expansion of private sector into the telecom space and the subsequent fall in data tariffs, BSNL became the largest loss-

making PSE in 2017-18, with losses of ₹7,993 crore.

What needs to be done?

- **Manpower Planning Strategy:** There is a need for every CPSE to conduct a comprehensive manpower planning exercise by identifying the key skills and talent requirements across all levels.
- **Rational Pricing Mechanism:** PSUs should consider the market dynamics as well as the cost of producing and delivering for pricing the products/services to minimize losses.
- **Enhance autonomy:** For this, CPSUs' Board must be sufficiently empowered to take nearly all strategic decisions such as formation or dissolution of partnerships/Joint ventures, mergers/acquisitions, appointment of CEO etc. (as per a report by Committee on Public Undertakings 2018-19)
- **Strategic Disinvestment:** As mooted by NITI Aayog, all CPSEs except those in strategic area are eligible to be considered for strategic Disinvestment.
- **Sharing of Best Practices:** There should be identification and sharing of best practices adopted by various different PSUs.
- **Other measures** include timely **Technology Upgradation** as soon as the company starts losing market for their

Strategic Disinvestment

It is the sale of substantial portion of the Government shareholding of a **central public sector enterprise (CPSE) of up to 50%** or higher along with transfer of management control.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Of The NSSO

In The News

National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has recently released draft report of the first Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS).

This would generate more accurate and timely information.

What is Periodic Labor Force Survey?

- PLFS was launched in 2017 by the NSSO, superseding the earlier system where such data was available only every five years.
- It is a **regular survey** for generating estimates of **various labour force indicators** on quarterly basis for urban areas and annual basis for both rural and urban areas, at State/UT and all-India level.
- It would supply data not only about the **formal sector**, but also about the **informal sector**.
- The PLFS is designed to generate the indicators of labour market operations using two approaches:
 - o **Usual Status (US) approach:** This approach records only those persons as unemployed who had no gainful work for a major time during the **365 days** preceding the date of survey and are seeking or are available for work. Thus, the estimates of unemployment obtained on the basis of usual status approach are expected to capture **long-term open unemployment**.
 - o **Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach:** In this approach current activity status relating to the **week** preceding the date of survey is recorded. Those persons are classified as unemployed who did not have gainful work for even an hour on any day in the preceding week and were seeking or were available for work. Thus, weekly status approach would capture not only **open chronic unemployment** but also **seasonal unemployment**.
 - o In this survey, **Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) Method** has been adopted with field operators using tablets to enter the data.

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

PM Shram-Yogi Maandhan Yojana (PMSYM)

In The News

Ministry of Labour and Employment launched pension plan ‘PM Shram-Yogi Maandhan Yojana’ for informal workers.

years would pay Rs 100. Those in the upper age limit of 40 years will have to pay Rs 220.

About the Scheme

- **Eligibility:** The unorganised workers whose monthly income is Rs 15,000/ per month or less and belong to **the entry age group of 18-40 years are eligible** for the scheme.
 - They should not be covered under **New Pension Scheme (NPS), Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) scheme or Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**.
 - Further, he/she should not be an income tax payer.
- **Pension:** They shall receive minimum assured pension of **Rs 3000/- per month** after age of 60 years.
 - **In case of death during the receipt of pension**, his/her spouse shall be entitled to receive 50% of the pension received by the beneficiary as family pension.
 - **In case of death before 60 years of age**, his/her spouse will be entitled to join and continue the scheme subsequently by payment of regular contribution or exit the scheme as per provisions of exit and withdrawal. Family pension is applicable only to spouse.
- **Contribution by the Subscriber:** He/she is required to contribute the prescribed contribution amount from the age of joining PM-SYM till the age of 60 years.
- **Matching contribution by the Central Government:** PMSYM is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme on a 50:50 basis where prescribed age-specific contribution shall be made by the beneficiary and the matching contribution by the Central Government.
 - The contributions from workers per month will change depending on the applicant's age like at the age of 18 years would have to contribute Rs 55, whereas workers at the age of 29

Comparison between Atal Pension Yojana and PMSYM

- APY also targets the unorganised sector and is co-contributory in nature, and promises a minimum pension between **₹1,000-5,000** while the PMSYM pension is capped at just **₹3,000 per month**.
- PMSYM is only open to those with **monthly income of up to ₹15,000**, whereas APY contains **no such income limit**.
- In APY, you can choose to contribute **monthly, quarterly or half yearly**, which is of great help to those in the unorganized sector with irregular income. PMSYM only allows **monthly** contributions.
- APY provides for **return of corpus on the death** of the subscriber and his spouse. In PMSYM, workers **only get a pension** and do not accumulate a corpus for their family. On the death of the worker and his/her spouse, the corpus is forfeited to PMSYM.
- PMSYM will be directly managed by **the government** unlike APY, which is regulated by the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**.

National Minimum Wage

In The News

- The Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Anoop Satpathy has brought out a timely technical Report on “**Determining the Methodology for the Fixation of the National Minimum Wage (NMW)**”.
- A uniform national minimum wage of Rs 9,750 per month or region-wise minimum wages ranging from Rs 8,892-Rs 11,622 per month for five regions (as of July 2018) has been recommended.

Background

- Wage policy and minimum wages have been subject of considerable debate in India
- **The Payment of Wages Act, 1936, and the Minimum Wages Act 1948**, sought to provide protection and ensure better working conditions for low-paid workers
- The **absence of criteria** in the Minimum Wages Act to determine minimum wages has been addressed by **Indian Labour Conference and SC recommendations** providing guidelines for this purpose. Through its Five Year Plans, the Planning Commissions also contributed towards addressing wage issues in India.
- Over the years, there has been a demand to improve the minimum wage policy and even an interest in framing a “national wage policy”.
- In 2017, Code on Wages Bill, provided for bringing in a statutory National Minimum Wage. In this regard, this expert committee was tasked to determine the methodology for the same.

Need of the National Minimum Wage

- **To ensure a uniform standard of living across the country-** At present, there are differences in minimum wages across states and regions. Such differences are attributed to the fact that both the central and state governments set, revise and enforce minimum wages for the employments

covered by them

- **Allow for easier implementation and compliance with the minimum wage law-** as it will reduce ambiguity and confusion over multiple wage laws.

Code on Wages Bill, 2017

- This bill will **amalgamate the four central labour laws** relating to wages: The Payment of Wages Act, 1936, The Minimum Wages Act, 1948, The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- The proposed Wage Code establishes that the central government may notify a **statutory national minimum wage** for the whole country. It will ensure that no State Government fixes the minimum wage below the National Minimum Wages for that particular area as notified by the Central Government
- Under the Wage Code, the central and state governments will constitute their respective **advisory boards**. These boards will advise the respective governments on aspects including: (i) fixing minimum wages; and (ii) increasing employment opportunities for women.
- The central or state governments will **fix the number of hours that will constitute a working day**, as well as a day of rest for employees every week. The amount of overtime will be at least twice the normal wage of the employee.

Recommendations of the Committee

- **Need to update existing norms for fixing minimum wages-** in the light of the latest available evidence relating to per household consumption units, food and nutritional requirements, changing consumption pattern and non-food expenditure requirements.
- **Need for elaborating a nationally representative and culturally palatable food basket-** by adopting an approach that would focus on a balanced diet rather than

merely its calorie intake. Hence, committee recommends minimum wage at a level that would allow for a minimum recommended intake (per adult person per day) of 2,400 calories, 50 grams of protein and 30 grams of fats.

- **Intermediate adjustment for inflation-** to accommodate changes in prices at least in every six months, on the basis of the CPI made available by the CSO.
- **Non-food items-** For estimating the required expenditure on non-food items, the committee identifies two groups of commodities:
 - o **Essential non-food items**, namely clothing, fuel and light, house rent, education, medical, footwear, and transport;
 - o **Other non-food items**, such as entertainment, durable goods, toilet articles, other household consumables, consumer services excluding conveyance, and consumer taxes
- **Single value of the National Minimum Wage-** for India should be set at Rs.375 per day as of July 2018. This would be equivalent to Rs.9, 750 per month, irrespective of sectors, skills, occupations and rural-urban locations. It has also recommended to introduce an **additional house rent allowance** (city compensatory allowance), averaging up to INR 55 per day i.e., INR 1,430 per month for urban workers over and above the NMW.
- **Method for estimating the NMW at the regional level-** For the purpose of estimating national minimum wages at regional levels, the committee has grouped the **states into five regions** based on a composite index and have recommended region specific national minimum wages in the range of Rs 8,892-Rs 11,622 per month.
- **Minimum wages should be fixed at round numbers-** which are much easier to disseminate. This will also facilitate the minimum wage enforcement process.
- **Creation of a research unit in the Ministry of Labour and Employment-** to support the Central Advisory Board and

State Advisory Boards at the time of formulating recommendations to set and adjust minimum wages.

National Minimum Wage

In The News

Recently Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions (OSDT).

About the Scheme

- It is launched under **Section 18 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007** which will provide a cost-free and expeditious **complaint redressal mechanism** relating to deficiency in customer services in digital transactions conducted through **non-bank entities** (like mobile wallets or tech enabled payment companies using UPI for settlements) regulated by RBI.
- **The Ombudsman for Digital Transactions** is a **senior official appointed by the Reserve Bank of India** (appointed for a period not exceeding 3 years at a time) to redress customer complaints against System Participants as defined in the Scheme for deficiency in certain services covered under **the grounds of complaint**.
- The Scheme also provides for an **Appellate mechanism** under which the complainant / System Participant has the option to appeal against the decision of the Ombudsman before the Appellate Authority.
- Transactions undertaken through the banking channels will still be managed by the **Banking Ombudsman**.
- The new ombudsman will work from the 21 existing offices of the Banking Ombudsman and work **within the existing territorial jurisdictions**.
- **Customer compensation:**
 - o Rs 1 lakh is the compensation that can be awarded in lieu of loss of customer's time, expenses incurred and mental agony.
 - o Rs 20 lakh is the maximum compensation the digital payments ombudsman can award.

Why it is needed?

- There is a need to establish a digital payments ombudsman, keeping in mind the **massive adoption of digital payments in the country and the magnitude of complaints** regarding problems incurred during those transactions. This is due to the complexities and challenges involved in the process such as fraudulent transactions.
- A dedicated and empowered grievance redressal mechanism becomes a prerequisite for **promoting the level of trust and customer confidence** in this powerful channel that has wide and deep reach,.

Related Information

Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007

It provides for the **regulation and supervision of payment systems** in India and designates the apex institution (RBI) as the authority for that purpose and all related matters.

About Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006

- The Banking Ombudsman is a quasi-judicial authority appointed by the Reserve Bank of India
- It aims to provide a cost-effective grievance redressal mechanism to customers for deficiency in certain banking services.
- All Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Scheduled Primary Co-operative Banks are covered under the Scheme.
- The complaint has to be first filed in the respective banks before approaching Ombudsman.

Setting Up Of India Post Bank As Payment Bank

In The News

The Standing Committee on Information Technology has submitted its report on ‘Setting up of Post Bank of India as a Payments Bank- Scope, Objectives, and Framework’.

About India Post Payment Bank (IPPB)

- It is a financial service provider, launched with the mandate of improving **financial inclusion**.
- It has been incorporated under the **Companies Act, 2013** as a **public limited company** with 100% Government of India equity under **Department of Posts (DoP)**.
- **Objectives**
 - Provide a secure and reliable payments channel for **social security payments** under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) etc. and all Government to Citizen (G2C) transactions.
 - Become the preferred partner for **service delivery for Government** (Central, State and Local).
 - Tie up with various other banks, insurance companies, mutual fund houses and other financial institutions and service providers to help in **customer acquisition and distribution of third-party products** like loans, insurance etc.
 - Safe, economical and reliable money transfer to meet the **needs of migrant labourers and the unorganized sector**.
 - To provide a **payments platform for integrating services provided by Government and Private sector** for the economic upliftment of the poorer and marginalized sections in both urban and rural India.
 - Build the **most accessible** payments bank through various channels including **Mobile Point of Sale (MPoS), mobiles, Internet banking transactions at the Post Office Counters as well as at the door step of the customers and**

encourage the transition to a less cash economy.

Challenges for IPPB

- **Striking down of certain provisions of Aadhaar by SC** has made Aadhaar based KYC authentication difficult. The last mile rural population may not have other required documents prescribed by RBI to become part of the formal financial ecosystem.
- **Promoting IPPB as well as Maintaining balance with DoP work by staff:** It needs to be ensured that the work of Department of Posts (DoP) does not get affected by IPPB-related activities. Also, DoP staff needs to be trained in digital operations. For this, they can be associated with the centrally sponsored schemes under Digital India Programme such as NDLM/PMDISHA.
- **Competition from Private Payment Banks** such as Aditya Birla, Airtel, Jio and Paytm Payment Banks. For eg- there is a need to **review the interest rate of 4%** on savings account which is on a lower side as compared to other Payment Banks.
- **Low utilization of door-step banking services provided by IPPB:** There is some reluctance in people in rural and remote areas to opt for IPPB services.
- **Sustenance issue:** Since IPPB cannot lend or issue credit cards, the only source of its income would be the transaction fee and not interest spread, hence sustenance issues will persist unless it provides its services efficiently, at lower cost.
- **Other challenges include:** Under-utilization of allocated funds, Inadequate manpower etc.

National Policy On Electronics, 2019

In The News

The Union Cabinet has recently approved the National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE 2019).

Need for this new Policy

- **Evolving nature of Electronics Industry in India-** The implementation of the Schemes/ Programmes under the aegis of the **National Policy on Electronics 2012** (NPE 2012) has successfully consolidated the foundations for a competitive Indian ESDM value chain. Now, this NPE 2019 proposes to build on that foundation to propel the growth of ESDM industry in the country
- **Spillover effects of Electronics Industry-** such as growing security concerns, rising inverted duty structures, dependence on major powers and potential of job creation.
- Hence, Electronics is not just about a manufacturing of electronics as a consumable but electronics, which will have impact on working of every sector.

Mission and Objective the Policy

- The Policy envisions positioning India as a **global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing - (ESDM)** by promoting domestic manufacturing, skill development, start-up, export eco-system and improving ease of doing business for the ESDM industry.
- It aims to achieve a turnover of \$400 billion and generate 1 crore jobs in the ESDM sector by 2025.

Strategy outlined in the NPE 2019

- **Creating eco-system for globally competitive ESDM sector-** by encouraging domestic manufacturing through consistent tax incentives, establishing Electronic Manufacturing Clusters, promoting Defence Offsets and sub-sectors like semi-conductor facilities, display fabrication units etc.

- **Developing and Mandating Standards in the sector-** using a standards development framework, which would include institutional mechanism for participation of all stakeholders (Government, Industry, Academia, Experts) and mandatory compliance in the field of electronics goods, including cyber security.
- **Promoting Ease-of-doing Business-** by facilitating single window mechanism for global investors using existing mechanisms like **Invest India, National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency**.
- **Encourage Industry-led R&D and Innovation-** in all sub-sectors of electronics. This would encompass support to various initiatives in areas like 5G, IoT/ Sensors, Artificial Intelligence etc. The support will include new Educational Courses, Incubation Centres, **Sovereign Patent Fund** and incorporate **principles of sustainability** of electronic goods through their life cycle.
- **Human Resource Development-** by generating research base at Ph.D. level, opportunities for joint IPRs to Indian candidates at foreign institutions, and work closely with all agencies (Centre and State) to ensure availability of adequate skilled manpower to the industry.
- **Export Promotion-** by providing attractive package of incentives so that exporters can compete in global markets
- **Promote Trusted Electronics Value Chain-** to improve national cyber security profile and control its supply chain across **national defense and critical national infrastructure** like energy grids, communication networks, digital economy etc.
- **Promote Cyber Security-** by enhanced **understanding** of cyber security issues, risks; **development** of testing facilities, photonics, nano-based devices etc by the

start-ups. Further, **encouragement for use** of tested & secure IT products, secure chips,

- **Developing Core Competencies in the sub-sectors of Electronics-** such as Indian Fabless Chip Design Industry, Medical Electronic Devices Industry, Automotive Electronics Industry, Power Electronics for Mobility and Strategic Electronics Industry.
- **Promotion of Electronic Components Manufacturing Ecosystem-** by providing incentives for lithium-ion cells, chip components, fuel cells, optical fibre, solar cells etc.
- **Promotion of Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) Industry-** including Engineering & Design of PCBs, Functional testing, Maintenance services like warranty and repair services etc.
- **Mega Projects-** by providing special package which would invite extremely high-tech and huge investments in areas like semiconductor facilities, display fabrication etc.
- **Preferential Market Access-** by encouraging states to adopt the Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order 2017 (**PPO 2017**) and leveraging the **Government e-Market Place (GeM)** in the procurement of electronic products (including cyber security).
- **Governance Structure-** Creation of institutional mechanism for implementation of various schemes under the Policy, including support from the State Governments.
- **Other Measures-** Promoting Eco-park for e-Waste processing, Warehousing of raw materials, Acquiring mines of Rare Earth Metals in foreign countries (Africa, Australia) and Developing an index to assess the status of electronics manufacturing industry in the states.

Draft E-Commerce Policy

In The News

The government released the draft e-Commerce policy.

Need for an E-Commerce policy

- **Data Ownership:** In the age of e-Commerce, companies control large amounts of customer data. The questions, related to control of an individual over his own data or government accessing the data of its citizens, need to be answered.
- **Rapid growth of e commerce:** The Indian B2C e-commerce market was valued at \$38.5 bn in 2017 and is estimated to rise to \$200 bn in 2026, while B2B e-commerce was estimated to be around \$300 bn. Its export potential too has not been realized. Thus, the rules for electronic commerce in the country must be clearly laid-down.
- **Presence of multiple regulators:** The specific issues in e-Commerce are the subject matter of different statutes - Information Technology Act 2000, Competition Act 2002, Consumer Protection Act 1986 etc. – and involves multiple government departments. Hence, a national e-commerce policy would consolidate the various norms and regulations to cover all stakeholders.
- **Other regulatory issues:** Government is finding existing regulations inadequate to deal with issues thrown up by the digital economy. For instance, authorities cannot impose ‘custom duty’ on digital transactions. Regulators find it difficult to hold entities responsible that have physical presence abroad.
- **Consumer Protection:** A strong regulatory regime would address the issues of frauds in online sale and protect the interest of consumers.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** There is a lack of requisite connectivity required for e-Commerce & digital literacy in many parts of the country. New e-Commerce policy will address such structural issues.
- **Inequality in opportunity among**

businesses: Enterprises with deep pockets indulge in **large scale capital dumping** to finance sustained selling at losses, which has threatened existence of small businesses. A policy is needed to provide a level-playing field to all stakeholders, including consumers, MSMEs & start-ups.

- **International Trade Outlook:** A new policy will preempt any possible obligations on e-commerce imposed by WTO. Creating binding obligations, like permanent moratorium on imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions, would lead to loss in revenue of developing countries like India.

Strategy proposed in the draft policy

- **Data:** The policy acknowledges the importance of data as a ‘**national asset**’/ ‘**societal common**’ and seeks to establish a legal & technological framework to **restrict cross-border flow of data** generated in India. It calls for **creating domestic standards for devices** which are used to store, process and access data to increase interoperability, enhance data security and prevent violation of privacy.
- **Infrastructure Development:** It recommends according ‘**infrastructure status**’ to supporting **digital infrastructure** like data centres, server farms for data storage etc. **Designated implementing agencies** should establish requisite physical infrastructure (like power supply, internet connectivity etc.). Also, **domestic alternatives to foreign-based clouds** and email facilities should be promoted.
- **E-Commerce Marketplaces**
 - **FDI Policy:** The policy aims to clearly **demarcate between a marketplace model & an inventory-based model** and seeks to encourage FDI in the ‘marketplace’ model alone.
 - Other important provisions are related to anti-Counterfeiting & Anti-Piracy Measures, grievance redressal mechanism

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t y

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

etc.

Regulatory Issues

- **Inter-disciplinary nature of e-commerce:** Standing Group of Secretaries on E-Commerce (SGoS) should tackle specific issues emerging under different statutes, give recommendations to address policy challenges & ensure that the policy keeps pace with the digital environment.
- **Controlling data flow & network:** Regulation of advertising charges in e-commerce, especially for MSMEs & start-ups. To seek better accountability in situations of AI-driven decision making, the government must reserve its **right to seek disclosure of source code & algorithms.**
- **Law & Order:** Access to data for maintenance of law & order must be allowed.
- **Small enterprises and start-ups:** Small firms and start-ups attempting to enter the digital sector can be given ‘**infant-industry**’ status.
- **Taxation Issues:** The concept of ‘**significant economic presence**’ should be adopted as the basis for determining ‘**permanent establishment**’ for the purpose of taxation. Additionally, the current practice of not imposing custom duties on electronic transmissions must be reviewed in light of the changing digital economy.
- **Content Liability:** Online platforms and social media (‘intermediaries’) must bear the responsibility & liability to ensure genuineness of any information posted on their websites.
- **Stimulating the Domestic Digital Economy:** It intends to increase use of internet in day-to-day governance and economy. E.g. automating logistics sector through online customs clearance & adopting Customs Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) platform.
- **Export Promotion Through E-Commerce:** The transaction

procedures must be simplified to increase competitiveness of e-commerce exports.

National Mineral Policy 2019

In The News

The Union Cabinet has recently approved the National Mineral Policy, 2019 which aims at bringing about more effective regulation to the sector as well as a more sustainable approach while addressing the issues of those affected by mining.

Background

- National Mineral Policy 2019 replaces the extant National Mineral Policy 2008 in compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court in **Common Cause v/s Union of India & Others**.
- The Ministry of Mines constituted a committee under the chairmanship of **Dr. K Rajeswara Rao** to review the National Mineral Policy 2008.
- Based on the committee's report and subsequent deliberations with stakeholders, the ministry has finalized the policy.

Need of the review of Policy

- **Low rate of growth of Indian Mining sector-** with just 1-2 per cent contribution to GDP over the last decade (as opposed to 5 to 6 per cent in major mining economies).
- **Lack of focus on exploration-** the production vs import of minerals is in the ratio of 1:10 in India. High import is mainly because of non-availability of raw material for industries. Hence, exploration must be treated as a business and treating it as a startup giving tax holidays, tax benefits etc. to encourage investments for exploration.
- **Lack of incentives with private sector to invest-** Companies fear investing in exploring minerals owing to various risks.
- **Need to address illegality in mining-** Apparently 102 mining leases in the state of Orissa did not have requisite environmental clearances, approvals under the Forest Act, 1980.
- **Need to address environmental concerns-** e.g. in Bellary due to mining operation. Also there is need for reclamation and restoring the mined land.

- **Need to address concerns of intergenerational rights** Salient features of National Mineral Policy 2019
- Introduction of **Right of First Refusal for reconnaissance permit and prospecting license (RP/PL) holders-** for encouraging the private sector to take up exploration.
- **Encouragement of merger and acquisition** of mining entities and **transfer** of mining leases
- **Creation of dedicated mineral corridors** to boost private sector mining areas.
- **Granting status of industry to mining activity** to boost financing of mining for private sector and for acquisitions of mineral assets in other countries by private sector.
- **Long-term import export policy for mineral** will help private sector in better planning and stability in business.
- **Rationalize reserved areas given to PSUs** which have not been used and to put these areas to auction, which will give more opportunity to private sector for participation.
- **Efforts to harmonize taxes, levies & royalty** with world benchmarks to help private sector.
- **Introduces the concept of Inter-Generational Equity** that deals with the well-being not only of the present generation but also of the generations to come.
- **Constitutes an inter-ministerial body** to institutionalize the mechanism for ensuring sustainable development in mining.
- **Incorporation of e-governance-** IT enabled systems, awareness and Information campaigns have been incorporate.
- **Focus on using waterways-** coastal waterways and inland shipping for evacuation and transportation of minerals.
- **Utilization of the district mineral fund** for equitable development of project affected persons and areas.

PM-KISAN

In The News

In the Interim Budget 2019-20, the Union Government has launched the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)**.

About PM-KISAN scheme

- **Objective:**
 - o To provide **income support** to all Small and Marginal landholding farmer families having cultivable land.
 - o To **supplement the financial needs of the farmers** in procuring various inputs to ensure proper crop health and appropriate yields, commensurate with the anticipated farm income.
- **Benefits:** Under the scheme, financial benefit as given below will be provided to all Small and Marginal landholder farmer families across the country
 - o Landholder Farmer families with total cultivable holding **upto 2 hectares** shall be provided a **benefit of Rs.6000** per annum per family payable in three equal installments, every four months.
 - o **Multiple land parcels** (even if each is less than 2 hectares) held by a single family will be pooled together to determine eligibility.
 - o **Even landholdings, bigger than 10 hectares**, will be eligible for benefits under the scheme, if owned by multiple families (e.g. If five brothers jointly own a single 10 hectare holding, each of them will be eligible for the scheme).
- **Responsibility of identifying** the landholder farmer family eligible for benefit under the scheme shall be of the **State/UT Government**.
- The lists of eligible beneficiaries would be **published at the village level** to ensure transparency.
- **Exclusions:** Certain categories of beneficiaries of **higher economic status** such as institutional land holders, former and present holder of constitutional posts, persons who paid income tax in last assessment year etc. shall not be eligible for

benefit under the scheme.

- o For the purpose of exclusion **State/UT Government can certify** the eligibility of the beneficiary based on **self-declaration** by the beneficiaries.
- A **dedicated PM Kisan Portal** will be launched for implementation of the scheme.
- This is a **Central Sector Scheme** and will be **funded fully by the Government of India**.

Why needed?

The agriculture sector employs over 50% of the workforce either directly or indirectly, and remains the main source of livelihood for over 70% of rural households. Thus, economic development is not possible without sustained overhaul of agriculture in India.

- **Stagnant farm income:** Indian agriculture has been marred with stagnant and uncertain farm income.
 - o According to a report by NITI Aayog, between 1993-94 and 2015-16, the income per cultivator grew at an annual rate of just 3.4%.
 - o To achieve the target of doubling farmers' real income, it will have to grow at 10.4% annually between 2015-16 and 2022-23. This is almost impossible to achieve without any supplemental support.
- **High Indebtedness:** More than half of the agricultural households in India are in debt, with average debt of Rs 47,000. National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 2014 says that average farmer income was around Rs 3,081 per month.
- **Rural Distress & Farmer Suicides:** According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report (2015), over 8000 farmers and 4500 agricultural labourers have committed suicide.
- **Supply Side Constraints:** Farmers are unable to get remunerative prices for their produce, especially for non- MSP commodities, because of the regulations in domestic market (e.g. stocking limitations

under Essential Commodities Act 1955), restrictions in export market & externalities like depressed international prices.

- **Increased Public Unrest:** In 2018, there were 13 massive protests held by farmers across the country, which has put significant pressure on the Government to respond appropriately.

Benefits of PM-KISAN

- For the first time, an attempt has been made to **transfer income directly to farmers without using price** (of either inputs or output) as a policy tool. Earlier, the focus has mainly been on provision of inputs at lower price (input subsidies) and provision of a higher output price (MSP).
- Since benefits are not linked to production of any crop, the **resultant supply-demand imbalance would be minimal**, unlike in the case of MSPs.
- It can **replace input subsidies**, many of which have resulted in gross overuse of resources (e.g. pesticides, free electricity etc.) resulting in soil degradation & declining water tables in states like Punjab. When raising farmers' income is the main objective, direct transfer may perhaps be a more appropriate instrument.
- Many **farmers still depend on informal sources** (local arhatiyas, moneylenders etc.) **for credit**. There are substantial delays in payment by procurement centres (e.g. in case of sugarcane), which leads to distress selling. Providing **assured supplemental income** to the vulnerable farmer families would help them meet their emergent needs especially before the harvest season.
- It would **improve the credit uptake and boost rural consumption demand**.
- The **cash transfers have greater efficiency**

than loan waivers & subsidies, as they enable poor households to directly purchase required goods & services as well as enhance their market choices.

- With the support of a minimum income, youths from farm households may be **inspired to start enterprises** or take higher training or look for higher paying non-farm jobs.

Issues in conception & implementation

- **Insufficient Amount**
 - Annual direct income transfer (DIT) under PM-KISAN would be only about 5-8% of their existing income levels. Also, it is less in comparison to schemes rolled out in Telangana (Rythu Bandhu) and Odisha (KALIA).
- **Beneficiary selection**
 - Under this scheme, **family is being defined as a unit**, while most other government schemes use household (group of people living together using common kitchen) as a unit. The **re-classification** might be an administrative challenge.
 - The scheme is not universal in nature. Strict targeting is prone to corruption due to bureaucratic discretion and politics. Moreover, **exclusion errors** are more common in targeted schemes.
 - It is unclear if beneficiary farmers, who wish to lease their lands to tenant farmers or keep their lands fallow for some time, are eligible to receive cash benefits.
- **Coverage**
 - According to the 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census, around 40% of rural households are landless and depend on manual labour. The scheme **does not include landless farmers** - tenants, sharecroppers etc. In the regions of high tenancy, the absentee landlords will receive greater benefits under the scheme.
 - Many Adivasi communities also cultivate land as **community farmers** & without individual rights, and may be

left out of the scheme, although they are among the most vulnerable.

- **Poor maintenance of land records:**
 - o Many states (e.g. Jharkhand, Bihar, Gujarat & Tamil Nadu) have still **not digitized land records** under Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme.
 - o In most parts of the country, **land records are not regularly updated**, especially in case of inherited land, which may lead to exclusion of beneficiaries.
 - o **Verifying ownership** claims can be a daunting task, as multiple government departments hold the required documents - Registration Department maintains sale deeds, maps are kept by the Survey Department, while the Revenue Department keeps property tax receipts.
- **DBT related issues:**
 - o Direct cash transfer in accounts has previously met (like in MNREGA) with **delays in disbursing wages**. Also, rural banking infrastructure has poor outreach & lacks last mile connectivity.
 - o Cash transfers can be **eroded by local price increases**, even if they are indexed to the general price level.
- **Authentication Issues:**
 - o For 1st planned payout on 31st March 2019, **field functionaries** are pushed to meet stiff targets. Being **short-staffed & inadequately trained**, this might result in many **technical and unforeseen errors** in land record reconciliation.
 - o From the 2nd installment, Aadhaar authentication will be compulsory to access benefits. But, as evident from previous welfare schemes, biometric authentications face significant hurdles.
- **Impact on Agriculture:**
 - o Lure of cash benefits may further induce fragmentation of family-owned land among members.
 - o Today, agriculture in India faces diverse set of problems. While Punjab faces scarcity of water, Bihar faces the

challenge of poor supply chains and lack of infrastructure. It would be more judicious for policy makers to find synergies and areas of alignment rather than pushing a one-size fits all prescription.

Way Forward

- **Address the lacunae in the existing scheme** like exclusion of landless farmers & create adequate institutional infrastructure for easy identification of beneficiaries and land record reconciliation.
- As agriculture is a state subject, the Centre should **focus more on creating an enabling environment** through responsive bureaucracy, easing of doing business, market infrastructure, and trade facilitation. The processes related to cropped area assessment & claim payout need to be taken care of by the state governments.
- There is a need for **comprehensive social security package for farmers**, which includes health insurance as well. The KALIA scheme, which includes a life insurance cover & additional personal accident coverage of Rs 2 lakh, is a good example in this regard.
- This could pave a way for the **introduction of minimum basic income (MBI) for farmers** in future.

GS - IV

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Printed March 2020
Page 17/2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Social Accountability

In The News

The Rajasthan government has started the process for bringing the legislation on social accountability.

What is Social Accountability?

- Social Accountability in public service delivery is defined as **an approach towards ensuring accountability** that relies on **civic engagement**.
- It is a product of 2 things working together: a **system of institutions** that makes accountability structurally possible and an **informed & mobilized citizenry** that can draw upon platforms of engagement to make accountability demands from the system.
- The need for the state to be accountable to its citizens stems out of the **‘social contract’ that the citizens share with the state**. In a democracy, this contract is operationalised when citizens elect a government and invest the elected representatives with the power to govern them.
- Social accountability can ensure **increased development effectiveness, improved governance and empowerment**.

Objectives of Social Accountability

- **Ensure transparency**, free flow of information and sharing of the information with public
- **Monitor programs & policies** through community score cards, citizens report card, expenditure tracking & social audits
- **Seek accountability of public functionaries and authorities** for timely delivery of goods & services as per citizens' entitlements and job charts of the functionaries
- Setup a **well-structured feedback & grievance redress mechanism**, starting from the Village Panchayats
- **Enable public hearings** in delivery system with widest possible scope so as to cover not only welfare measures and policies by the

state but also regulatory, symbolic and extractive functions of the state at grass root level.

Challenges

- **Resistance to reform, risk of collusion and co-option:** Since Social Accountability initiatives upset the vested interests who have an incentive to maintain the status quo, there is much resistance to reform
 - Bureaucracy **withholding data or providing inadequate information** for conduct of social audits
 - **Collusion** between NGOs & government agencies that can reduce the initiative to a fraudulent, ghost exercise
- **Inadequate infrastructure** such as lack of space for public hearing, lack of digital connectivity at common service centre / information & facilitation centre etc. and absence of **skilled workforce**.
- **Involvement of multiple stakeholders:** Public service delivery in many developing countries often includes multiple agencies such as government bodies, charitable or other aid organisations, the private sector and citizens. It is questionable to what extent the social accountability approaches applies to such unorthodox but nonetheless widespread organisational arrangements.

Way Forward

- **Making Social Accountability mandatory in policy design:** Participation and collective action by the citizens is especially forthcoming when people have a **legal right to participate**, which provides a greater degree of legitimacy to their actions.
 - **The Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011** should be taken up for the consideration immediately.
- **Developing and monitoring norms and guidelines on Social Accountability initiatives:** Clear and precise guidelines in conducting Social Accountability

initiatives can go a long way in preventing ghost initiatives and minimizing collusion. Independent agencies / NGOs need to play a bigger role to ensure that guidelines are being adhered to.

- **Strengthening section 4 of the RTI:**

Access to information is a critical precondition for any Social Accountability initiative to be successful.

- The compliance on Section 4 of the RTI Act, that mandates proactive disclosure of information, needs to be incentivized through rankings and making funds contingent on compliance. CAG can take up **auditing of compliance on Section 4** as a part of its regular financial audit of the departments.
- Moreover, quality of information reported also needs to be improved so that it is relevant and reliable.

- **Capacity Building:** Training people and community based organisations (CBOs) about the process of social audits would make their participation more meaningful.

- Every public authority must appoint a **Grievance Redressal Officers (GRO)** along with creation of National Social Accountability Commission, as an apex grievance redressal body.

- Every public authority engaged in delivery of public services must publish and **adhere to citizens’ charter**.

PT POINTERS

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 108
Page No. 108

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

DIPP AS DEPARTMENT FOR PROMOTION OF INDUSTRY AND INTERNAL TRADE

Context: The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has been renamed as the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.

- **Mandate:** To deal with matters related to start-ups, facilitating ease of doing business among others.

Key facts:

- It functions under the *Ministry of Commerce and Industry*.
- It will look into matters related to promotion of internal trade, including retail trade, welfare of traders and their employees, facilitating ease of doing business and start-ups.
- *The matters related to internal trade were earlier under the domain of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs.*

CATEGORISATION OF FARMERS

Context: In agriculture Census, the operational holdings are categorised in five size classes as follows:

1. Marginal: Below 1.00 hectare.
2. Small: 1.00-2.00 hectare.
3. Semi- Medium: 2.00-4.00 hectare.
4. Medium: 4.00-10.00 hectare.
5. Large: 10.00 hectare and above.

DAKSHINA BHARAT HINDI PRACHAR SABHA

- **Context:** The President of India recently unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the *Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha* in Chennai.

About Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha:

- Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha was established in the year 1918 by Mahatma Gandhi with the sole aim of propagating Hindi in southern states.
- The first Pracharak was Devadoss Gandhi son of Mahatma Gandhi.

INDIA'S FIRST “CAREER PORTAL”

- **Context:** India's first “career portal” has been launched in Rajasthan.

Key facts:

- It is aimed at addressing *the needs of secondary and higher secondary students for information on scholarships and career choices*.
- It was *launched with the support of United Nations Children's Fund*.
- The portal is expected to help the students take “informed decisions” about their academic and professional pursuits.

‘DELHI DECLARATION’ ON DIGITAL HEALTH

- *Delhi Declaration on digital health* was adopted at the concluding session of the ‘4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit’.
- It calls for WHO's leadership in digital health and for it to establish a specific mechanism to centrally coordinate digital health to assist its Member States.

2ND EDITION OF ISL DICTIONARY

Context:

- ‘2nd Edition of ISL Dictionary’ for Hearing Impaired Persons has been launched.
- The Dictionary Includes 6000 Words Under Categories of Academic, Legal, Medical, Technical & Everyday Terms.

Key facts:

- The dictionary has been developed by *Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLR&TC)* under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), M/o Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Its aim is to give Deaf people the constitutional right to speech and opportunity of freedom of expression and also bringing them into the main stream of the society.

“SOUTH COAST RAILWAY (SCOR)”- A NEW ZONE OF INDIAN RAILWAYS

Context: Creation of a new zone with headquarter at Visakhapatnam.

Key facts:

- The new zone named “South Coast Railway (SCoR)”, will comprise of existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions.
- South Central Railway will comprise of Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Nanded divisions.

PARMANU TECH 2019

- The ‘Parmanu Tech 2019’ conference was recently *organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)*.
- The conference discussed issues related to Nuclear Energy and Radiation Technologies.

KERALA TO GET COUNTRY’S 2ND LONGEST RAIL TUNNEL

What is it?

- A 10.7-km railway line, including a 9.02-km tunnel, has been proposed to connect the upcoming *Vizhinjam International Multipurpose Deepwater Seaport to the railway network*.
- The 9.02-km tunnel, mooted by *Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd (KRCL)*, will be *the second longest railway tunnel in the country*. The 11.26-km *Pir Panjal rail tunnel, connecting Banihal and Hillar Shahabad, is the longest*.

DARD ARYANS

Why in News?

- A seminar was held recently in New Delhi that extensively discussed the need to preserve the legacy of Dard Aryans.

Who are they?

- Some 200 km from Leh are the villages of Dha, Hanu, Garkone and Darchik on

both sides of the Indus River, inhabited by the Buddhist Dard Tribes. The villages are together called the “Aryan valley”. The word ‘Dard’ is derived from a Sanskrit word, ‘Daradas’, which *means people who live on hillsides*.

- *They might have descended from soldiers in*

Alexander’s army who had come to the region over 2,000 years ago. The Dard Aryans, however, do not document their history. These tribals are *mainly dependent on agriculture*.

Threats and the need for their protection:

1. There is a threat to the heritage of the community owing to modernisation, migration and religious conversion.
2. The community now numbers about 4,000. Over the last few decades, many of them have embraced Islam or Buddhism.
3. The community prohibits marriage with outsiders to keep the gene pool intact. Of late, the Dard men have been migrating to other parts of the region (in search of livelihood) and marrying outside the tribe.
4. The tribe is struggling to find a balance between modernity and traditional values.

GOVT. GRANTS DIVISIONAL STATUS TO LADAKH

- granted Ladakh a divisional status. It will comprise Leh and Kargil districts, with headquarters at Leh. Earlier, Ladakh was a part of the Kashmir division.

Implications:

- With this, *there shall be three administrative units* of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in the State.
- The move leaves the Kashmir valley geographically the smallest division at 15,948 sq. km, Jammu division at 26,293 sq. km and Ladakh, the biggest division, at 86,909 sq. km.
- Ladakh will now get its own Divisional Commissioner and Inspector General of Police.

What necessitated this?

During the winter months, the entire Ladakh region remains cut-off from the rest of the country for almost six months. The remoteness and inaccessibility of the area makes it eligible for establishing a separate division.

DD ARUNPRABHA

What is it?

- It is a dedicated 24×7 Satellite channel for Arunachal Pradesh launched recently. It is the 24th satellite channel operated by Doordarshan.
- DD Arunprabha is the Doordarshan's second channel for the northeastern region; DD Northeast was the first one. The channel will familiarise people across India with the beauty and the culture of the State.

E-COCOON

- It is a mobile application launched by the Ministry of Textiles for quality certification in silkworm seed sector.
- E app will help quality certification in silk worm sector. It will be used by the Seed Analysts and Seed Officers nominated under Central Seed Act for system and product certification through real time reporting.

Background:

- India is the **second largest producer of silk** after China and the **largest consumer of silk**.
- India's silk production capacity is expected to reach about 38,500 tonnes by 2020 from the current level of 32,000 tonnes.

VIVID- 2019

Context:

- VIVID-Vision Insight and Voices as India goes Digital"- the District Informatics Officer (DIO) meet, is being organised by National Informatics Centre (NIC).

What is it?

- The meet is held as an initiative to interact with the DIO's and to share their experiences as well as contribution, as digital change-makers at the grass- root level in the States.
- VIVID started in 2017, as an annual event, with the objective to empower NIC officials in the field of technology.
- The National meet will cover a wide range of relevant topics in various technical sessions including Emerging Technologies (Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning & Big Data Analytics), Cyber Threats & Counter Measures (Changing Digitisation Paradigm & its impact on Security), Enterprise Level Applications, and many other relevant topics.

MOHAR RESERVOIR PROJECT

Context:

- The Chhattisgarh Water Resources Department (CWRD) commenced the work on Mohar Reservoir Project in Balod district without ensuring the land required was acquired and obtaining environment and forest clearances, says the latest Comptroller and Auditor General report on Chhattisgarh.

Key facts:

The Mohar reservoir project is proposed across the confluence of river Dangarh and Dalekasa with a catchment of 143 square km. The gross command area of the project is 1100 hectares. The proposed project is expected to irrigate 800 hectares of Kharif paddy and supply 1000 million cubic (1 TMC) water by feeder canal to Kharkhara reservoir for 500MW power plant of NSPCL in Bhilai.

HOVEIZEH LONG-RANGE CRUISE MISSILE

1. **Iran** has announced the successful test flight of Hoveizeh long-range cruise missile.

2. The Hoveizeh Cruise Missile is part of the Soumar family of cruise missile and has a range of over 1,350 km (840 miles).
3. It is designed to use against ground targets.
4. The Hoveizeh missile needs a very short time for its preparedness and can fly at a low altitude and is manufactured by the Aerospace Industries Organization of Israel.

FATEH SUBMARINE

- It is a “state-of-the-art” domestically produced Iranian submarine capable of firing cruise missiles. It was unveiled recently in Bandar Abbas.
- It is *Iran’s first submarine in the semi-heavy category*.
- The underwater-vessel weighs nearly 600 tonnes and is equipped with torpedoes and naval mines in addition to cruise missiles.
- The submarine can operate more than 200 metres below sea level for up to 35 days.
- It has subsurface-to-surface missiles with a range of about 2,000 kilometres (1,250 miles), making it capable in reaching Israel and U.S. military bases in the region.

LAIRCM SELF-PROTECTION SUITES

- US has approved a foreign military sale to India

— *two 777 Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) Self-Protection Suites (SPS)*, for an estimated \$190 million.

Significance:

1. LAIRCM is *a programme meant to protect large aircraft from man-portable missiles*. It increases crew-warning time, decreases false alarm rates and automatically counters advanced infrared missile systems.
2. These systems will *protect two Boeing-777 Head- of-State aircraft*. This would bring *the security of Air India One at par with that of Air*

Force One, the aircraft used by the American President.

3. *It consists* of missile warning sensors (MWS), a laser transmitter assembly, control interface unit (CIU) and processors to detect, track, jam and counter incoming infrared missiles.

COBRA GOLD MILITARY EXERCISE

Context: The United States and Thailand are hosting the multi-nation Cobra military exercise this year. The exercise is taking place in the northern Thai province of Phitsanulok. This is the 38th edition of this exercise.

About the exercise:

- This is a Thai-American initiative with an aim to improve coordination between the armed forces. It is one of the Asia-Pacific region’s largest multinational military exercises that is held in Thailand every year. It was first held in 1982 and its headquarters is in Bangkok, Thailand.
- India joined this exercise for the first time in 2016 while China was admitted for the first time in 2015 but was only allowed to participate in humanitarian assistance training.

VELAYAT 97

- It is a navy drill being conducted by Iran. It aims to evaluate the navy’s equipment, practice launching weapons and enable the troops to gain readiness for a real battle.

EXERCISE SAMPRITI – 2019

- **Context:** As part of the ongoing India Bangladesh defence cooperation, a joint military exercise Sampriti-2019 will be conducted at Tangail, Bangladesh.
- *Exercise Sampriti-2019 is an important bilateral defence cooperation endeavour between India and Bangladesh* and this will be the eighth edition of the exercise which is hosted alternately by both countries.

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
f t y

Telegram
Pulse March 2020
Pulse PT 2020

The exercise is *aimed to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies*. The exercise will involve tactical level operations in a counter insurgency and counter terrorism environment under the UN mandate.

CARNOT PRIZE

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Railways and Coal, Piyush Goyal has been awarded the Carnot Prize 2018 for the transformational changes brought by him during his tenure as Union Minister of Power.

About Carnot prize:

- Annual recognition by *the US-based Kleinman Center for Energy Policy for distinguished contributions to energy policy* through scholarship or practice.
- The prize has been *named after French scientist Sadi Carnot*, who in 1824 published *Reflections on the Motive Power of Fire*, which became the basis for the second law of thermodynamics.

BERESHEET- ISRAEL'S FIRST LUNAR LANDER LAUNCHED

- *Israel's First Lunar Lander- Beresheet*—was recently launched on board Falcon 9.
- Beresheet will attempt to become the *first Israeli spacecraft, and the first privately-operated mission, to land on the Moon*.
- *If successful, it will make the Jewish state only the fourth nation to ever to achieve a controlled touchdown on the moon's surface*. So far, only three other nations have carried out controlled “soft” landings on the moon – the United States, the former Soviet Union and China. Spacecraft from several countries, including India's Moon Impact Probe, Japan's SELENE orbiter and a European Space Agency orbital probe called SMART 1, have intentionally crashed on the lunar surface.
- *Beresheet would mark the first non-government lunar landing*. The 1,290-

pound (585-kg) spacecraft was built by Israeli nonprofit space venture SpaceIL and state-owned defense contractor Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) with \$100 million furnished almost entirely by private donors.

- Beresheet is designed to spend just two to three days using on-board instruments to photograph its landing site and measure the moon's magnetic field. Data will be relayed via the US space agency NASA's Deep Space Network to SpaceIL's Israel-based ground station Yehud.

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020