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## 1 Draft National Child Protection Policy

**Context:** The Ministry of Women and Child Development has recently released the draft National Policy on Child Protection. The protection of children until now is a part of the broader National Child Policy, 2013.

### Background

- The Supreme Court had directed the CBI to investigate allegations involving 17 shelter homes for children, destitute women, beggars and senior citizens in Bihar following the case of sexual abuse of more than 30 girls in a shelter home in Muzaffarpur in the State. The apex court had also asked the Centre to consider framing a national policy on protection of children.
- Draft National Policy on Child Protection has four aspects —**creating awareness, prevention, reporting and responding**.
- The current policy draws upon the safeguards provided under the Constitutions of India, various child-centric legislation, international treaties as well as other existing policies for the protection and wellbeing of children.

### Highlights of the Policy

- It aims at providing a **safe and conducive environment for all children** through the prevention and response to child abuse, exploitation and neglect.
- As per the draft, the policy provides a framework for all institutions and organizations (including corporate and media houses), government or private sector to understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding/ protecting children and promoting the welfare of children; individually and collectively.
- The draft policy recommends that **all organizations must have a code of conduct based on “zero tolerance of child abuse and exploitation”** for their employees and a declaration signed by them agreeing to ensure the safety of children.
- The policy requires organizations to lay down that employees don’t use language or behavior that is “inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate”.
- Institutions should also designate a staff member to ensure that procedures are in place to ensure the protection of children as well as to report any abuse.
- Organizations that undertake research and collect data on children, directly from children or indirectly from parents/community must ensure that children are not harmed or traumatized in any way during the process. All research staff must be trained on ethical practices and child friendly procedures.

- The document also comprises a **list of behaviors towards children that are punishable by law**, including the POCSO and Juvenile Justice Acts.

## 2 National Electronics Policy 2019

**Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved a National Electronics Policy 2019 which will replace the National Policy of Electronics 2012 (NPE 2012).

### About:

- The National Electronics Policy 2019, **aims to position India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing - (ESDM)** by encouraging and driving capabilities in the country for developing core components, including chipsets, and creating an enabling environment for the industry to compete globally. It proposes to build on the existing policy of 2012, to propel the growth of the ESDM industry in the country.

### Salient Features of NPE 2019

- ▶ Create eco-system for **globally competitive ESDM sector**: Promoting domestic manufacturing and export in the entire value-chain of ESDM.
- ▶ Provide incentives and support for manufacturing of core electronic components.
- ▶ Provide **special package of incentives for mega projects** which are extremely high-tech and entail huge investments, such as semiconductor facilities display fabrication, etc.
- ▶ Formulate suitable schemes and incentive mechanisms to encourage new units and expansion of existing units.
- ▶ **Promote Industry-led R&D and innovation** in all sub-sectors of electronics, including grass root level innovations and early stage Start-ups in emerging technology areas such as 5G, IoT/ Sensors, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Virtual Reality (VR), Drones, Robotics, Additive Manufacturing, Photonics, Nano-based devices, etc.
- ▶ Provide incentives and support for significantly enhancing availability of skilled manpower, including re-skilling.
- ▶ Special thrust on Fabless Chip Design Industry, Medical Electronic Devices Industry, Automotive Electronics Industry and Power Electronics for Mobility and Strategic Electronics Industry.
- ▶ **Create Sovereign Patent Fund (SPF)** to promote the development and acquisition of IPs in ESDM sector.
- ▶ Promote trusted electronics value chain initiatives to improve national cyber security profile.

## 3 National Mineral Policy 2019

**Context:** National Mineral Policy (NMP) 2019 has been approved by the cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.

### About:

- It **replaces the extant NMP 2008**.
- Ministry of Mines constituted a committee in 2017 under the **chairmanship of Dr. K. Rajeswara Rao to review NMP 2008**.
- Based on the received feedback and the comments/ suggestions from the Central Ministries/ Departments the Ministry of Mines finalized the NMP 2019.
- It is aimed to have a more effective, meaningful and implementable policy that brings in further transparency, better regulation and enforcement, balanced social and economic growth as well as sustainable mining practices and sustainable mining sector development in future while addressing the issues of project affected persons especially those residing in tribal areas.



### Salient Features of NMP 2019

- Introduction of Right of First Refusal for RP/PL holders, (There are three kinds of mineral concessions, viz Reconnaissance Permit (RP), Prospecting License(PL) and Mining Lease(ML))
- **Encouraging the private sector to take up exploration,**
- Auctioning in virgin areas for composite RP cum PL cum ML on revenue share basis,
- Encouragement of merger and acquisition of mining entities and transfer of mining leases and **creation of dedicated mineral corridors** to boost private sector mining areas.
- The 2019 Policy **proposes to grant 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
- It also mentions that Long term import export policy for mineral will help private sector in better planning and stability in business

## 4 National Policy on Software Products – 2019

**Context:** The National Policy on Software Products (NPSP) has been approved by the Union Cabinet to develop India as a Software Product Nation.

### About:

- The Indian IT Industry has predominantly been a Service Industry. However, a need has been felt to move up the value chain through technology oriented products and services. Under this regard, the **Government has approved the NPSP – 2019 to create a robust software product ecosystem.**
- Initially, an outlay of Rs.1500 crore is involved to implement the programmes/ schemes envisaged under this policy over the period of 7 years. Rs.1500 crore is divided into Software Product Development Fund (SPDF) and Research & Innovation fund.
- “Software Product Development Fund’ will participate in venture funds having objectives aligned to this policy and so can leverage private investments targeted to promote software product ecosystem. The SPDF will be financially managed by a professional financial institution.
- The policy proposes to create a 5,000-crore fund with industry participation to promote emerging technology such as Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Big Data and robotics. Of this, government contribution will be 1,000 crore.

### Features of NPSP – 2019

- It **aims to develop India as the global software product hub, driven by innovation, improved commercialization, sustainable Intellectual Property (IP)**, promoting technology startups and specialized skill sets and to align with other Government initiatives such as Start-up India, Make in India and Digital India, Skill India etc so as to create Indian Software products Industry of USD ~70-80 billion with direct & indirect employment of ~3.5 million by 2025.
- The Policy has the following **five Missions:**
  - To promote the **creation of a sustainable Indian software product industry**, driven by intellectual property (IP), leading to a ten-fold increase in India share of the Global Software product market by 2025.
  - To **nurture 10,000 technology startups in software product industry**, including 1000 such technology startups in Tier-II and Tier-III towns & cities and generating direct and in-direct employment for 3.5 million people by 2025.
  - To **create a talent pool for software product industry** through (i) up-skilling of 1,000,000 IT professionals, (ii) motivating 100,000 school and college students and (iii) generating 10,000 specialized professionals that can provide leadership.

- ▶ To **build a cluster-based innovation driven ecosystem** by developing 20 sectoral and strategically located software product development clusters having integrated ICT infrastructure, marketing, incubation, R&D/testbeds and mentoring support.
- ▶ In order to evolve and monitor scheme & programmes for the implementation of this policy, **National Software Products Mission will be set up with participation from Government, Academia and Industry.**

## 5 National Education Policy

### Context

- The draft of New National Education Policy has been recently **submitted by the Committee headed by Dr. Kasturirangan.**
- The draft has been shared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) for public comment.
- There were protests in many parts of the country mainly from Tamil Nadu regarding a clause in the draft recommending mandatory Hindi teaching in all schools as one of the three-language formula introduced from Class 1. Consequently the committee has removed this clause from the draft.

### About::

- The National Policy on Education (NPE) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education amongst India's people. The policy covers elementary education to colleges in both rural and urban India.
- The **first NPE was promulgated in 1968**, and in 1986.
- Most recently the government of India has appointed a **new committee under K. Kasturirangan** to prepare a Draft for the new National Education Policy for the next two decades. The report proposes an education policy, which seeks to address the challenges of: (i) access, (ii) equity, (iii) quality, (iv) affordability and (v) accountability faced by the current education system.

### Key provisions of the draft policy:

- **Early childhood care and education:** High-quality early childhood care and education will be provided for all children between the ages of 3 and 6 by 2025. This will be done within institutions such as schools and anganwadis, which would have a mandate to take care of the overall well-being of the child—nutritional, health, and education.
- **Ensuring foundational literacy and numeracy:** Every student will start achieving age-appropriate foundational literacy and numeracy by 2025. A slew of programmes and measures have been articulated for this purpose.
- **Transformed curricular and pedagogical structure:** The curriculum and pedagogical structures will be designed anew, based on children's cognitive and socio-emotional development. The curriculum will be integrated and flexible with equal emphasis on all subjects and fields.
- **Universal access and retention in schools:** All children between ages 3 and 18 will be in school by 2030. The Right to Education Act will be extended from pre-school to class XII. Currently this is from 6-14 years of age.
- **Teachers at the centre:** The profession of teaching, and so teachers, will be at the centre of the education system, focused on the student and educational aims. All schools will be fully resourced with teachers—with working conditions for an energetic work culture.
- **New institutional architecture for higher education:** India's current 800 universities and over 40,000 colleges will be consolidated into About: 10,000-15,000 institutions of excellence to drive improvement in quality and expansion of capacity. This architecture will have only large multi-disciplinary institutions, with significant investment.

- **Three types of higher education institutions** will be there: **Type 1 universities** focused on research but also teaching all programmes, undergrad to doctoral; **Type 2 universities** focused on teaching all programmes while also conducting research and; **Type 3 colleges** focused on teaching undergrad programmes. All types will grant their own degrees. There will be no system of university affiliations.
- **High-quality liberal education:** All undergraduate education will be broad-based liberal education that integrates the rigorous study of sciences, arts, humanities, mathematics and vocational and professional fields with choices offered to students. Multiple exit and entry points will be offered, with appropriate certification after one, two, three and four years of study. There will be a four-year undergraduate programme available in addition to three-year programmes.
- There will be a substantial increase in public investment to expand and vitalize public education at all levels.

## 6 National Logistics Policy

**Context:** Union Minister of Commerce and Industry of the policy reviewed the draft National Logistics Policy and proposed action plan for implementation prepared by the Department of Logistics, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

### About:

- The **draft National Logistics Policy** has been prepared in consultation with the **Ministries of Railways, Road Transport and Highways, Shipping and Civil Aviation** and forty-six Partnering Government Agencies (PGAs).

### Objective:

- To streamline rules, address supply-side constraints, lower logistics costs and ensure greater competitiveness for Indian products worldwide.

### Salient Features of the Policy:

- **National Logistics e-marketplace:** A National Logistics e-marketplace will be created as a one stop market place. It will involve simplification of documentation for exports/imports and drive transparency through digitization of processes involving Customs, PGAs etc in regulatory, certification and compliance services.
- **Optimise modal mix:** The draft policy has sought to optimize the modal mix (road-60%, rail-31%, water-9%) to global benchmarks (road - 25-30%, rail - 50-55%, water - 20-25%) and promote the development of multi-modal infrastructure.
- **Logistics Wing:** The policy recommends setting up a Logistics Wing that will be the nodal agency tasked to **identify key projects for driving first mile and last mile connectivity** and to optimize the modal mix to identify commodity and corridor for the most cost-effective mode of transport.
- **Logistics centre of Excellence:** Encourage industry, academia and government to come together to create a logistics Centre of Excellence, and drive innovation in the logistics sector.
- **Institutional Framework for policy:** For purpose of the new logistics framework, four committees/councils will be constituted:
  - ▶ **National Council for Logistics**, chaired by the Prime Minister.
  - ▶ **Apex inter-ministerial Committee**, chaired by the Minister of Commerce and Industry.
  - ▶ **India Logistics Forum** chaired by the Commerce Secretary with representation from key industry/business stakeholders and academia.
  - ▶ **Empowered task force** on logistics will be created, as a standing committee chaired by the head of the Logistics Wing.

## 7 Steel Scrap Recycling Policy

**Context:** The government has released Steel Scrap Recycling Policy that aims to reduce imports, conserve resources and save energy.

### About:

- **The Steel Scrap Policy will ensure processing and recycling of products in an organized, safe and environment friendly manner.**
- It will **evolve a responsive ecosystem to produce high quality ferrous scrap for quality steel production minimizing the dependency on imports.**
- It envisages a framework to facilitate and **promote establishment of metal scrapping centers** in India that will boost steel production.
- It also aims to **decongest the Indian cities from reuse of ferrous scrap**, besides creating a mechanism for treating waste streams and residues produced from dismantling and shredding facilities.
- **The country's steel scrap imports were valued at Rs 24,500 crore in 2017-18, while the deficit was to the tune of 7 MT.**
- The policy is based on **"6Rs principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Redesign and Remanufacture** through scientific handling, processing and disposal of all types of recyclable scraps including non-ferrous scraps, through authorized centers / facility".
- The gap between demand and supply of scrap can be reduced in the future and the country may be self-sufficient by 2030.
- **National Steel Policy 2017** aims to develop a globally competitive steel industry by **creating 300 MT per annum steel production capacity by 2030** with a contribution of 35-40 per cent from EAF/IF (Electric Arc Furnace/Induction Furnace) route.

## 8 National Steel Policy, 2017

**Context:** Steel is one of the most important products in the modern world and forms the backbone to any industrial economy. India being one of the fastest growing economies, thus to provide strong policy support to the untapped potential in this sector, the Union Cabinet approved the National Steel Policy (NSP) 2017.

### About:

- The National Steel Policy 2005 (NSP 2005) sought to indicate ways and means of consolidating the gains flowing out of the then economic order and charted out a road map for sustained and efficient growth of the Indian steel industry. However, the unfolded developments in India as also worldwide, both on the demand and supply sides of the steel market, have warranted a relook at the different elements of the NSP 2005.
- **India has become the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest steel producer in the world with a production of 91 MT and a capacity of 122MT in FY 2015-16.** The National Steel Policy 2017 (NSP 2017) is an effort to steer the industry to achieve its full potential, enhance steel production with focus on high end value added steel while being globally competitive.

### Salient Features of NSP, 2017:

- Create self-sufficiency in steel production by providing policy support & guidance to private manufacturers, MSME steel producers, CPSEs

- Encourage adequate capacity additions,
- Development of globally competitive steel manufacturing capabilities
- Cost-efficient production
- Domestic availability of iron ore, coking coal & natural gas
- Facilitating foreign investment
- Asset acquisitions of raw materials
- Enhancing the domestic steel demand
- The policy also envisages to **domestically meet the entire demand of high grade automotive steel**, electrical steel, special steels and alloys for strategic applications and **increase domestic availability of washed coking coal** so as to reduce import dependence on coking coal from About: 85% to around 65% by 2030-31.
- The New Steel Policy, 2017 aspires to **achieve 300MT of steel-making capacity by 2030.**

## 9 National Health Policy, 2017

**Context:** The last health policy was formulated in 2002. The socio economic and epidemiological changes since then necessitated the formulation of a New National Health Policy to address the current and emerging challenges of growing burden of non-communicable diseases and some infectious diseases, growing incidences of catastrophic expenditure due to health care costs and changing health priorities etc.

### About::

- The primary aim of the National Health Policy, 2017, is to inform, clarify, strengthen and prioritize the role of the Government in shaping health systems in all its dimensions-investments in health, organization of healthcare services, prevention of diseases and promotion of good health through cross sectoral actions, access to technologies, developing human resources, encouraging medical pluralism, building knowledge base, developing better financial protection strategies, strengthening regulation and health assurance.
- It aims at achieving universal health coverage and delivering quality health care services to all at affordable cost.

### Key Features of NHP, 2017:

- The broad principles of the policy is centered on Professionalism, Integrity and Ethics, Equity, Affordability, Universality, Patient Centered & Quality of Care, Accountability and pluralism
- **The policy is patient centric and quality driven** and seeks to promote quality of care, focus is on emerging diseases and investment in promotive and preventive healthcare.
- In order to provide access and **financial protection at secondary and tertiary care levels**, the policy proposes free drugs, free diagnostics and free emergency care services in all public hospitals.
- It envisages strategic purchase of secondary and tertiary care services as a short term measure to supplement and fill critical gaps in the health system.
- It advocates a **positive and proactive engagement with the private sector** for critical gap filling towards achieving national goals. It also advocates financial and non-incentives for encouraging the private sector participation.
- It proposes **raising public health expenditure to 2.5% of the GDP** in a time bound manner. It advocates allocating **major proportion (up to two-thirds or more) of resources to primary care** followed by secondary and tertiary care.

- The policy aspires to provide at the district level most of the secondary care which is currently provided at a medical college hospital.
- It also envisages a **three-dimensional integration of AYUSH systems** encompassing cross referrals, co-location and integrative practices across systems of medicines.
- It proposes **establishment of National Digital Health Authority (NDHA)** to regulate, develop and deploy digital health across the continuum of care.
- **Among key targets**, the policy intends to increase life expectancy at birth from 67.5 to 70 by 2025 and reduce infant mortality rate to 28 by 2019. It also aims to reduce under-five mortality to 23 by the year 2025. Besides, it intends to achieve the global 2020 HIV target.

\*\*\*\*\*

# e- GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

## 1 Parivesh

### Context:

- **Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub** (Parivesh) was launched by Prime Minister in August last year on **World Biofuel Day**, as single-window integrated environmental management system, developed under the 'Digital India' initiative.
- It is an ambitious web-based single-window system 'Parivesh' will be rolled-out at state levels bringing an end to the clearance obstacles for entrepreneurs.
- **What is PARIVESH?**
  - ▶ **PARIVESH (Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub) is a Single-Window Integrated Environmental Management System.**
  - ▶ It **automates the entire process** of submitting the application and tracking the status of such proposals at each stage of processing.
  - ▶ It is a workflow based application, based on the concept of web architecture.
  - ▶ It has been rolled out for online submission, monitoring and management of proposals submitted by Project Proponents to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC), as well as to the State Level Environmental Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAA), to seek various types of clearances (e.g. Environment, Forest, Wildlife and Coastal Regulation Zone Clearances) from Central, State and district-level authorities.
  - ▶ The system has been designed, developed and hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with technical support from **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, New Delhi.
  - ▶ The main highlights of PARIVESH include - **single registration and single sign-in for all types of clearances** (i.e. Environment, Forest, Wildlife and CRZ), **unique-ID for all types of clearances** required for a particular project and a single Window interface for the proponent to submit applications for getting all types of clearances (i.e. Environment, Forests, Wildlife and CRZ clearances).

### National Informatics Centre (NIC)

- It was established in 1976, and has emerged as a "**prime builder**" of **e-Government / e-Governance applications** up to the grassroots level as well as a promoter of digital opportunities for sustainable development.
- Through its ICT Network, "NICNET", has institutional linkages with all the Ministries / Departments of the Central Government, 36 State Governments/ Union Territories, and About: 708 District Administrations of India.

**Major activities are:**

- Setting up of ICT Infrastructure
- Implementation of National and State Level e-Governance Projects/Products
- Consultancy to the Government departments
- Research & Development
- Capacity Building

**2 PRAGATI**

- **It is a multi-purpose, multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation PRAGATI.**
- It is a unique integrating and interactive platform.
- It is aimed at addressing common man's grievances and thus provides a **grievance redressed mechanism.**
- It simultaneously **monitors and reviews important programmes** and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
- It uniquely bundles **three** latest technologies: **Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology.**
- It also offers a unique combination in the direction of **cooperative federalism** since it brings on one stage the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States.

**3 PRAKASH Portal**

**Context:** Government launches PRAKASH portal to improve coal supply to power plants.

**About:**

- PRAKASH stands for '**Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony**'.
- The Portal aims at bringing better coordination for coal supplies among all stakeholders viz - Ministry of Power, Ministry of Coal, Coal India, Railways and power utilities.
- This is an important step in ensuring adequate availability and optimum utilization of coal at thermal power plants.
- **The Portal is designed to help in mapping and monitoring entire coal supply chain for power plants**
  - ▶ Coal Stock at supply end (mines),
  - ▶ Coal quantities/ rakes planned,
  - ▶ Coal quantity in transit and
  - ▶ Coal availability at power generating station.

**Benefits of Portal to the Stakeholders**

- Coal company will be able to track stocks and the coal requirement at power stations for effective production planning



- Indian Railways will plan to place the rakes as per actual coal available at siding and stock available at power stations.
- Power stations can plan future schedule by knowing rakes in pipe line and expected time to reach.
- Stock at power generating station
- Ministry of Power /Ministry of Coal/ CEA/ POSOCO can review overall availability of coal at thermal power plants in different regions

## 4 ICEDASH & ATITHI

**Context:** Recently Ministry of Finance launched two new IT initiatives ICEDASH and ATITHI for improved monitoring and pace of Customs clearance of imported goods and facilitating arriving international passengers by electronic filing of Customs baggage and currency declarations.

### About:

- ICEDASH is an Ease of Doing Business (**EoDB**) **monitoring dashboard of the Indian Customs** helping the public to see the daily Customs clearance times of import cargo at various ports and airports.
- With ICEDASH, Indian Customs has taken a lead globally to provide an effective tool that helps the businesses compare clearance times across ports and plan their logistics accordingly.
- This dashboard has been **developed by Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in collaboration with National Informatics Centre (NIC)** and can be accessed through the CBIC website.
- **The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has launched a new mobile app named "ATITHI" for improved customs clearance.**
- It will also facilitate arriving international passengers with e-filing of baggage and currency declarations.
- It is expected to increase the transparency of customs functioning and reduce interface.
- The app. ensures access from any time at anywhere and also makes it easier for the passengers to access the custom duty information.
- In addition to that, it also supports the faster customs processes and provides multiple application support that fits the requirements of the users.
- ATITHI app can be used by all the travellers including Indian residents as well as foreign nationals those who are arriving in India by air across the globe.

### Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)

- Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (erstwhile Central Board of Excise & Customs) is a **part of the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance**, Government of India.
- It deals with the tasks of formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of Customs, Central Excise duties, Central Goods & Services Tax and IGST, prevention of smuggling and administration of matters relating to Customs, Central Excise, Central Goods & Services Tax, IGST and Narcotics to the extent under CBIC's purview.
- The Board is the administrative authority for its subordinate organizations, including Custom Houses, Central Excise and Central GST Commissionerates and the Central Revenues Control Laboratory.

## 5 eBkray - Online auction platform for assets attached by banks

### Context:

- **eBkray is an e-auction platform to enable online auction of attached assets by banks.**
- The eBkray platform **provides navigational links to all PSB e-auction sites**, property search feature and presents single-window access to information on properties up for e-auction, comparison of similar properties, and also contains videos and photographs of the uploaded properties.
- Buyers can use **IBAPI portal** to search and get properties details and participate in the auction process. Presently 21 banks are onboard on this portal
- Currently, there are 2,457 residential, 576 commercial, 333 industrial and 18 agricultural properties are available on eBkray platform among others.
- PSBs have attached assets worth over Rs 2.3 lakh crore in the last three fiscal years.

### Objectives of eBkray:

- To enhance user experience through seamless access to information by the search based on the type and location of the property put up for e-auction by the banks in India.
- To enable online auction of attached assets transparently and cleanly for the improved realization of value by banks.
- It will provide navigational links to all Public Sector Banks (PSBs) e-auction sites, property search feature and will present single-window access to information on properties up for e-auction, comparison of similar properties, as well as contains videos and photographs of uploaded properties.
- The platform also helps the buyer to easily navigate to the bank e-auction site after a notified property is selected. It also helps the user to search property using State-wise, District-wise and bank-wise details.

### Indian Banks Auctions Mortgaged Properties Information (IBAPI) portal

- It is an initiative of Indian Banks Association under the policy of the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance to provide a platform to provide details of mortgaged properties to be auctioned online by Banks, starting with PSBs.

## 6 Centralized Access Control System (CACS) & Training Module of e-BCAS

**Context:** In the latest development, the government has launched the Biometric enabled Centralised Access Control System (CACS) and 'e-BCAS Project Training Module', with the objective to enhance security and ease of doing business at airports.

- **Biometric enabled Centralized Access Control System (CACS) Project:**
  - **Ministry of Civil Aviation launched CACS project to enhance security and ease of doing business at airports.**
  - Covering 43 Airports of AAI and 5 Joint Venture airports at present, the CACS project is aimed to digitize the employee movement process at the airports.
  - This **multi-layered security system** encompasses the uniqueness of the Airport Entry Permit (AEP) users, biometric authentication in addition to PIN-based identity verification

through contactless smart card technology, which manages access of personnel along with RFID based automated vehicle access control system according to the region, terminal, zone, and gate access privileges.

- ▶ The cost of the card is Rs.225, which shall be valid for three years.
- ▶ Biometric ID (Biometric enabled Centralized Access Control System having chip embedded smart AEPs) thus issued, is non-duplicable.

- **e-BCAS Project Training Module:**

- ▶ Ministry of Civil Aviation launched e-BCAS project which aims to achieve a “paperless office” under e-Governance initiative of GoI.
- ▶ The objective of the e-BCAS project is to make all the activities in the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) transparent, user-friendly, and efficient and above all, the project intends to provide an ease of doing business with the stakeholders.
- ▶ The e-BCAS project included Training module, Quality Control and Operational module and Administration etc.
- ▶ e-BCAS Project: Training Module’ aims at helping more than 1.5 lac employees of various stakeholders by migrating from manual process of training to digital platform.

## 7 'Build for Digital India' programme

**Context:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Google have signed a statement of intent to roll-out 'Build for Digital India' programme.

**About:**

- **The programme will give engineering students a platform to develop technology-based solutions to address key social problems.**
- As part of the programme, engineering students across the country will be invited to apply and join in a learning journey that will help them transform their bright ideas into real-world solutions.
- Applicants will take part in online and offline learning opportunities on key technologies such as machine learning, cloud and android.
- These will be offered through Google’s Developer Student Club network and other Google Developer networks.
- Google will also offer mentorship sessions in product design, strategy and technology to the most promising products and prototypes.

## 8 Indian Ports Association launches 'PCS 1x'

- Indian Ports Association (IPA), under the guidance of Ministry of Shipping launched the Port Community System 'PCS 1x'.
- **'PCS 1x' is a cloud based new generation technology, with user-friendly interface.**
- The platform **offers value added services** such as notification engine, workflow, mobile application, track and trace, better user interface, better security features, improved inclusion by offering dashboard for those with no IT capability.
- A unique feature of 'PCS 1x' is that it can latch on to third party software which provides services to the maritime industry thereby enabling the stakeholders to access wide network of services.

- The system enables single sign on facility to provide one stop interface to all the functionalities across all stakeholders.
- Another major feature is the deployment of a world class state of the art payment aggregator solution which removes dependency on bank specific payment eco system.

## 9 Operation Digital Board

### Context:

- The Minister of Human Resource Development (**MHRD**) **launched Operation Digital Board** to leverage technology in order to boost quality education in the country.
- It is a revolutionary step which **will make the learning as well as the teaching process interactive** and popularize flipped learning as a pedagogical approach.

### About:

- Digital board will be introduced all over the country **in government and government aided schools from class 9th onwards as well as in higher education institutions.**
- The process will begin from the coming session of 2019.
- ODB aims at converting a class room into a digital class room and in addition to availability of e-resources at any time and at any place to students
- It will also **help in provisioning of personalized adaptive learning** as well as intelligent tutoring by exploiting emerging technologies like Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence & Data Analytics.
- It will leverage the existing platform of e-Pathshala, DIKSHA, NROER, NPTEL, e-pgpathshala SWAYAM and SWAYAM-Prabha DTH Channels etc. by MHRD have provided adequate content of high quality which can be taken to every classroom, and thereby facilitating blended learning and flip class learning.
- These pedagogical interventions can adequately raise the standards of teaching, irrespective of the location of the educational institutes.
- Such technology enabled learning can also inspire teachers across the country to raise their own standards of teaching.

## 10 National Knowledge Network (NKN)

### Context:

- **India has decided to extend National Knowledge Network to Bangladesh.**
- Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh unveiled e-plaques for supply of buses and trucks, inauguration of 36 community clinics, 11 water treatment plants, and extension of National Knowledge Network to Bangladesh.

### About:

- **What is National Knowledge Network?**
- NKN is a state-of-the-art **pan-India network** and is a revolutionary step towards creating a knowledge society without boundaries.
- **NKN is intended to connect all the knowledge and research institutions in the country using high bandwidth / low latency network.**

- In March 2010, the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure (CCI) approved the establishment of the National Knowledge Network (NKN) to be implemented by National Informatics Centre over a period of 10 years.
- Establishing NKN is a significant step towards ushering in a knowledge revolution in the country with connectivity to 1500+ institutions.
- NKN has been established keeping the following features in mind:
  - ▶ Establishing a high-speed backbone connectivity which will enable knowledge and information sharing.
  - ▶ Enabling collaborative research, development and Innovation.
  - ▶ Facilitating advanced distance education in specialized fields such as engineering, science, medicine etc.
  - ▶ Facilitating an ultra-high speed backbone for e-Governance.
  - ▶ Facilitating integration of different sectoral networks in the field of research, education, health, commerce and governance.
  - ▶ Link to Global Networks to collaborate with the research communities across the globe.
- NKN is designed as a Smart Ultra High Bandwidth network that seamlessly interconnects the leading Scientific and Technological institutions - which are pursuing world-class research and development.
- NKN design is inherently proactive; it takes into account the requirements that may occur in the near term and long term.

## 11 National Digital Health Blueprint 2019

**Context:** NITI Aayog had earlier floated the 'National Health Stack' paper as "implementation framework" for Ayushman Bharat. After holding consultations on it, the Ministry of Health formed a committee under former UIDAI chairman and former MeitY secretary, which drafted the 'National Digital Health Blueprint 2019'.

### About:

- Recently, the **National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB) Committee submitted** the final "**National Digital Health Blueprint**" (NDHB) report to Union Health Minister.
- NDHB will help in providing a **common platform for integration of existing applications in health domain and data** which has existed in silos, either in public health facilities, or, in private healthcare facilities, in India.
- Building on the initial document of "**National Health Stack**" (NHS) by NITI Aayog, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has defined clear **timelines, targets and the resources required for digital convergence of healthcare programmes** in India.
- The priorities of the central government of India were included in the "**National Health Policy 2017**" and **NDHB shows the implementation angle for achieving the same.**
- The National Health Policy 2017 (NHP 2017) envisages the goal of attainment of the highest level of **health and well-being for ALL at ALL ages**, through increasing access, improving quality and lowering the cost of healthcare delivery.
- The **key principles** of NHP 17 include universality, citizen-centricity, quality of care and accountability for performance.
- **Leveraging digital technologies** for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of all the healthcare services.

- Creation of **district-level electronic databases**, establishing registries for all diseases of public importance
- Establishing '**Federated National Health Information Architecture**', to roll-out and link systems across **public and private health providers at State and National levels** consistent with Metadata and Data Standards (MDDS) & **Electronic Health Record (EHR)**.
- Leveraging the potential of digital health for 2-way systemic **linkages between primary, secondary and tertiary care** to ensure continuity of care.
- This can be considered as the biggest leap of towards achieving the **goal of Universal Healthcare Coverage (UHC)** with impetus on the **digital healthcare component**.

### National Health Stack

- **NHS Objective:** The NHS envisages a centralized health record for all citizens of the country in order to streamline the health information and facilitate effective management of the same.
- **NHS Mechanism:** The proposed NHS is an approach to address the challenge and seeks to employ latest technology including Big Data Analytics and Machine Learning Artificial Intelligence, a state of the art Policy Mark-up Language and create a unified health identity of citizens - as they navigate across services across levels of care, i.e. Primary, Secondary and Tertiary and also across Public and Private.

## 12 e-Governance Initiatives for ST Welfare Schemes

**Context:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs has developed online portals namely DBT Tribal and NGO Grants Online Application & Tracking System for bringing in e-Governance in implementation of welfare schemes for Scheduled Tribes (STs) with greater efficiency and transparency.

- **DBT Tribal Portal**
  - ▶ There are 3 main modules for Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship. Data sharing module is mainly meant for sharing beneficiary-data by States.
  - ▶ In Communication module, the States have facility to upload documents, raise query and DBT data uploaded by States is used for faster release of funds. Monitoring module has facility of MIS reports & Dashboards.
  - ▶ Ministry has further developed module for verification of students by Universities and Colleges under Fellowship scheme and Grievance Module for all stake holders including beneficiary students in 3 Central Sector schemes and Institutions.
- **NGO portal**
  - ▶ It has been developed for implementing scheme of Aid to Voluntary Organizations working for the welfare of STs, has been fully revamped & redesigned with simplified Application form, Inspection Report and Fund Processing module.
  - ▶ The system has been automated and the NGOs simply need to follow specified steps to access grants.
  - ▶ Other features include online grievance redressal, and it is integrated with **NFS** (National Fellowship), **NOS** (National Overseas Scholarship) and **NSP** (National Scholarship Portal).

## 13 Womaniya on GeM

**Context:** Government e-Marketplace [GeM] has launched "Womaniya on GeM", an initiative for women entrepreneurs.

**About:**

- This initiative aims to enable women entrepreneurs and women self-help groups [WSHGs] to sell handicrafts and handloom, accessories, jute and coir products, home décor and office furnishings, directly to various Government ministries, departments and institutions.
- The initiative seeks to develop women entrepreneurship on the margins of society to achieve gender-inclusive economic growth.
- It is assumed that Womaniya on GeM will spur hyper-local economic subsequently address goals and objectives under United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*

**Government e Marketplace (GeM):**

- It is a 100% government owned company setup under the aegis of Ministry of Commerce and Industry for procurement of common use goods and services by Government ministries, departments and CPSEs.

**Vision**

- To affect an evolution in public procurement promoting a transparent, efficient and inclusive marketplace.

**Mission**

- Institute a unified procurement policy to encourage behavioral change and drive reform.
- Establish a lean, dynamic organization capable of continuous innovation and market driven decision making.
- Build an easy to use, fully automated platform to ensure transparency and efficiency in procurement
- Demonstrate commitment to delivering value by ensuring right quality at right price
- Create a sustainable ecosystem covering all stakeholders and driving inclusive development in India

**14****One Nation One FASTag: Govt's RFID Solution for Digital Payment of Highway Toll**

**Context:** Minister of Road Transport and Highways - Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the "One Nation One FASTag" scheme at the Indian Mobile Congress in New Delhi. The plan aims to integrate the collection of toll digitally and ensure seamless mobility of vehicles across India.

**About:**

- FASTags are stickers that are affixed to the windscreen of vehicles and **use RFID technology to enable digital, contactless payment of tolls without having to stop at toll gates.**
- The tags are linked to bank accounts and other payment methods.
- As a car crosses a toll plaza, the amount is automatically deducted, and a notification is sent to the registered mobile phone number.
- Sensors are placed on toll barriers, and the barriers open for vehicles having valid FASTags.
- **A FASTag is valid for five years** and needs to be recharged only as per requirement.

- According to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), these devices will make passing through tolls considerably smoother since drivers will no longer have to carry cash or stop to make a transaction.

## 15 'goAML'- New Anti-Money Laundering Platform by UAE

**Context:** The UAE's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) launched the new anti-money laundering platform 'goAML' (Anti-Money Laundering) to curb the organized crimes.

### About:

- The UAE has become the **first country in the Gulf** to launch a new reporting platform **developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** to curb organized crimes.
- All financial institutions in the country have to report any suspicious transactions through this platform.
- The platform **will help the FIU prevent money laundering, financing of terrorism and other illicit financial activities.**

### What is goAML?

- The platform was developed by UNODC as a strategic response against financial crime, as advised by the **Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.**
- It is a one-stop, fully integrated solution that meets the IT needs of most FIUs, with the primary objective of enhancing the capacity of member states to detect financial crime and to meet international standards relating to money laundering and terrorist financing.

### United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

- UNODC was established in 1997 as part of the United Nations reform combining the previous UN Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention.
- The mandate of the Office is enshrined in UN conventions such as UN Conventions on Drugs, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols on Trafficking in Persons, on Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and on Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, the UN Convention against Corruption, the universal instruments against terrorism and the UN standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice.
- With the help of these instruments, UNODC helps Member States address the issues of illicit drugs, crime and terrorism.

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# FINANCE & BANKING

## SCHEMES & INITIATIVES

### 1 Utkarsh 2022

**Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) board finalised a three- year roadmap to improve regulation and supervision, among other functions of the central bank.

**About:**

- **Utkarsh 2022, the Reserve Bank of India’s Medium-term Strategy Framework**, in line with the evolving macroeconomic environment, to achieve excellence in the performance of RBI’s mandates and strengthening the trust of citizens and other institutions.
- A formal strategic management framework was launched in April 2015 to rearticulate the core purpose, values and vision statement of the Reserve Bank so as to delineate its strategic objectives in contemporary terms, to provide a framework and backdrop within and against which its policies would be formulated.
- The strategic framework contains, inter alia, the Bank’s Mission, Core Purpose, Values and Vision Statements, reiterating the Bank’s commitment to the Nation.
- **The Medium-term Vision Statements set out the following:**
  - ▶ Excellence in performance of statutory and other function
  - ▶ Strengthened trust of citizens and other Institutions in the RBI
  - ▶ Enhanced relevance and significance in national and global roles
  - ▶ Transparent, accountable and ethics-driven internal governance
  - ▶ Best-in-class and environment friendly digital as well as physical infrastructure
  - ▶ Innovative, dynamic and skilled human resources
- These vision statements are mutually reinforcing and will guide the RBI during the medium-term period (2019-22) through various strategies.
- The Management of the Reserve Bank attaches high importance to ‘Utkarsh 2022’ and will **periodically monitors its implementation** and progress through a Sub-committee of the Central Board.

### 2 BHIM 2.0

**Context:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology(MeiTY) launched BHIM 2.0.

- **What is BHIM?**

- ▶ Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) is a payment app that lets user make simple, easy and quick transactions using Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- ▶ User can direct bank payments to anyone on UPI using their UPI ID or scanning their QR with the BHIM app.
- ▶ One can also request money through the app from a UPI ID.
- ▶ Pioneered and developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), BHIM has been conceived and launched by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi on 30th December 2016 to bring in Financial Inclusion to the nation and a digitally empowered society.

- **Features of BHIM:**

- ▶ **Send Money:** Money can be sent by entering Virtual Payment Address (UPI ID), Account number and QR Scan.
- ▶ **Request Money:** Money can be collected by entering Virtual Payment Address (UPI ID). Additionally through BHIM App, one can also transfer money using Mobile No. (Mobile No should be registered with BHIM or \*99# and account should be linked).
- ▶ **Scan & Pay:** Easy payment by scanning the QR code through Scan & Pay.
- ▶ **Profile:** You can view the static QR code and Payment addresses linked to your account. You can also share the QR code through various messenger applications like WhatsApp, Email etc. available on phone and can also download the QR code.
- ▶ **Bank Account:** BHIM provides switching between multiple bank accounts linked with BHIM App.
- ▶ **Language:** Currently BHIM is available in **13 languages, i.e., Hindi, English, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Odia, Kannada, Gujarati, Marathi, Assamese and Bengali.**

- **What is UPI?**

- ▶ **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** is a system that **powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application** (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood.
- ▶ It also caters to the **"Peer to Peer" collect request** which can be scheduled and paid as per requirement and convenience.

- **Features and benefits of BHIM 2.0:**

- ▶ **Linking of overdraft account:** In addition to current and savings accounts, customers can link their overdraft account to UPI. Customers will be able to transact instantly and all benefits associated with overdraft account shall be made available to the users. UPI 2.0 will serve as an additional digital channel to access the overdraft account.
- ▶ **Signed intent and QR:** With this option, while making payment using the intent or through scanning QR, the user will get additional security in the form of signed QR / intent. With the signed QR, issues related to tampering QR as well as having non-verified entities are reduced.

**National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI):**

- **NPCI is an umbrella organization for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.**
- **It is an initiative of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks' Association (IBA) under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, for creating a robust Payment and Settlement Infrastructure in India.**

- Considering the utility nature of the objects of NPCI, it has been incorporated as a “**Not for Profit Company under the provisions of Section 25 of Companies Act 1956 (now Section 8 of Companies Act 2013)**”, with an intention to provide infrastructure to entire banking system in India for physical as well as electronic payment and settlement systems.
- The Company is **focused on bringing innovations in the retail payment systems** through the use of technology for achieving greater efficiency in operations and widening the reach of payment systems.

### 3 Gold Monetization Scheme

#### Context

- The Reserve Bank of India has amended the regulations relating to eligibility criteria for making deposits under the gold monetization scheme.
- Persons eligible to make a deposit - Resident Indians [Individuals, HUFs, Proprietorship & Partnership firms, Trusts including Mutual Funds/Exchange Traded Funds registered under SEBI (Mutual Fund) Regulations, Companies, charitable institutions, Central Government, State Government or any other entity owned by Central Government or State Government can make deposits under the scheme.

#### Gold Monetization Scheme

- **Launched in 2015**, the scheme is a new deposit tool to ensure mobilization of gold possessed by various families and institutions in India.
- It is expected that the scheme would turn gold into a productive asset in India as beneficiaries earn interest on unused gold lying idle in bank lockers.
- It is a modification of the earlier Gold Deposit Scheme (GDS) and Gold Metal Loan Scheme (GML), and it replaced the Gold Deposit Scheme, 1999.
- Deposits can be made by residents of India, HUFs', mutual funds and exchange trading funds registered under SEBI. Joint deposits are allowed with a minimum of two holders with no cap on the maximum number.

#### Key features of Gold Monetization Scheme

- The scheme accepts a minimum deposit of 30gm of raw gold in the form of a bar, coin or jewelry.
- There is **no maximum limit of investment** under this scheme.
- The scheme **allows premature withdrawal after a minimum lock-in period**. However, it charges penalty for such withdrawals.
- **All designated commercial banks are eligible** to implement the Gold Monetization Scheme in India.
- The scheme would offer interest at 2.50% per year which is higher than previous rates offered on gold investments.
- The short term deposits offered by Gold Monetization Scheme can be redeemed in either gold or in rupees at current rates applicable at the time of redemption.

### 4 Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)

- The code **has four pillars of institutional infrastructure**.

- **The first pillar** of institutional infrastructure is a class of regulated persons, the '**Insolvency Professionals**'. They would play a key role in the efficient working of the bankruptcy process. They would be regulated by 'Insolvency Professional Agencies.
- **The second pillar** of institutional infrastructure is a new industry of '**Information Utilities**'. These would store facts About: lenders and terms of lending in electronic databases. This would eliminate delays and disputes About: facts when default does take place.
- **The third pillar** of institutional infrastructure is in **adjudication**. The **NCLT** will be the forum **where firm insolvency will be heard** and **DRTs** will be the forum **where individual insolvencies will be heard**. These institutions, along with their Appellate bodies, viz., NCLAT and DRATs will be adequately strengthened so as to achieve world class functioning of the bankruptcy process.
- **The fourth pillar** of institutional infrastructure is a **regulator**, '**The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India**'. This body will have regulatory over-sight over the Insolvency Professional, Insolvency Professional agencies and information utilities.

### **The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2018 – Key features:**

- Allottees under a real estate project should be treated as financial creditors (debate is open for want of clarity over secured/unsecured creditors).
- The voting threshold for routine decisions taken by the committee of creditors has been reduced from 75% to 51%.
- During the insolvency resolution process, a committee consisting of financial creditors will be constituted for taking decisions (by voting) on the resolution process.
- The Code prohibits a person from being a resolution applicant if his account has been identified as a non-performing asset (NPA) for more than a year.
- The Code also **bars a guarantor of a defaulter from being an applicant**.
- A resolution applicant may withdraw a resolution application, from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), after such process has been initiated. Such withdrawal will have to be approved by a 90% vote of the committee of creditors.
- The ineligibility criteria for resolution applicants regarding NPAs and guarantors will not be applicable to persons applying for resolution of MSMEs.

## **5 Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY)**

**Context:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has introduced Mahila Samridhi Yojana for providing loan to women entrepreneur.

### **About:**

- National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) provide loans to small entrepreneurs belonging to the target group (backward classes) in order to cater the Micro Finance through self-help groups (SHGs) by **State Channelizing Agency (SCA)** under Micro Finance Scheme.

### **Loan under Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY)**

- Loans under MSY are provided through SCAs, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Nationalized Banks to the target group.
- MSY loan is provided to Safai Karamchari and Scavenger and their dependants for projects with a maximum project cost up to Rs.60000 for small and petty business and sundry income generating activities.

## 6 DIGITAL PAYMENTS - Trends, Issues and Opportunities in India

**Context:** According to a survey conducted by ACI Worldwide and YouGov 42% Indians prefer digital payments over cash during shopping.

- According to NITI AYOJ, **the digital payments market In India is all set to grow to \$1 trillion by 2023** led by growth in mobile payments.
- In the light of such a tremendous growth of digital payments, the regulations and security of the users' data has become a challenge for the government.
- Accordingly, a **committee on Digital Payments** was constituted under the Chairmanship of **Ratan P. Watal** in 2016 to recommend medium term measures of promotion of Digital Payments Ecosystem in the country. The Committee submitted its final report to Finance Minister in December 2016.
- On the basis of recommendations a group of stakeholders from different Departments of Government of India and RBI was constituted in NITI Aayog under the chairmanship **Ratan P. Watal** to facilitate the work relating to development of a metric for Digital Payments which was the most important recommendation of Watalcommittee. This group prepared a document on the measurement issues of Digital Payments. Accordingly, a booklet titled "Digital Payments: Trends, Issues and Challenges" was released in July 2017.

### Digital Payment - Definition

The **Payment and Settlement Act, 2007** has defined **Digital Payments** as any "electronic funds transfer" that is any transfer of funds which is initiated by a person by way of instruction, authorization or order to a bank to debit or credit an account maintained with that bank through electronic means and includes point of sale transfers; automated teller machine transactions, direct deposits or withdrawal of funds, transfers initiated by telephone, internet and, card payment.

## 7 Sabka Vishwas-Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2019

- Government announced the Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme in the Union Budget 2019-2020 for quick closure of pending litigations in Central Excise and Service tax from pre-GST regime.
- The objectives of the scheme are:
  - ▶ One time measure for liquidation of past disputes of central excise and service tax (Dispute Resolution component)
  - ▶ To provide an opportunity for voluntary disclosure to non-compliant tax-payers (Amnesty Component)
- For all cases pending in adjudication or appeal in any forum, this scheme offers a relief of 70% from the duty demand if it is less than or equal to Rs.50 lakhs and 50% if it is more than Rs. 50 lakhs.
- In cases of voluntary disclosure, the declarant will have to pay full amount of disclosed duty.
- Proceedings under the Scheme will be fully automated

## 8 Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme, 2020

- This is a **direct tax scheme announced in Budget 2020**, for settling direct tax disputes between individuals and the income tax department.

- Earlier, the scheme offered complete waiver on interest and penalty to the taxpayers with a full and final settlement of the dispute if the scheme was availed by March 31, 2020. An individual opting for settlement after March 31, 2020 was required to pay additional 10 per cent penalty on the disputed tax amount.
- The government has extended the deadline for settling tax disputes under the Vivad se Vishwas scheme without paying any interest and penalty to June 30, 2020 from March 31, 2020.
- The **Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Bill, 2020** is similar to the '**Sabka Vishwas Scheme**', which was brought in to reduce litigation in indirect taxes in the year 2019.
- The government is witnessing a big shortfall in revenues, especially tax revenues, hence, increasing revenues in one of the priorities of the government. Direct Tax collections have been lower than their budget targets due to the overall economic slowdown and a cut in the corporate tax rate in September, 2019.
- Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved an amendment to the 'Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Bill, 2020' in order to widen its scope to cover litigation pending in various Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs).

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# EDUCATION SCHEMES & INITIATIVES

## 1 Paramarsh

**Context:** Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) launched 'Paramarsh' scheme, which is a University Grants Commission (UGC) scheme for mentoring National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) Accreditation Aspirant Institutions to promote Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

### About:

- Higher education institutions that have failed to meet the **quality standards** of the NAAC can now get **mentorship** from the top universities and colleges.
- Under the Paramarsh scheme, initially **71 universities and 391 colleges with NAAC score of 3.26 and above will mentor five colleges each.**
- The first step of the mission is to improve the quality and standards of education that has been initiated by the UGC with the launch of **Paramarsh** and **Deeksharambh**

**NAAC:** The NAAC is an **autonomous body** that **assesses** and **accredits** higher education institutions (HEIs) in India. It assesses the higher learning institutes on the basis of **seven parameters**.

The parameters include teaching-learning and evaluation, infrastructure and learning resources, research, innovation and extension, curricular aspects, governance, leadership and management, student support and progression and institutional values and best practices.

### Aim of the Scheme

- To improve the **global ranking** of the Indian higher education institutions.
- The scheme also proposes to provide **financial assistance** to the mentoring institutions and the option of appointing an expert, who can be paid a fellowship amount of Rs. 31,000 per month.
- The scheme will lead to **enhancement** of the **mentee institutions'** quality and its profile as a result of improved quality of research, teaching and learning methodologies.

## 2 Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)

**Context:** Around 2.22 crore villagers are given Digital Education under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA).

**More on News:**

- According to **Electronics and Information Technology Ministry**, around 2.22 crore villagers are given Digital Education under PMGDISHA.
- Over 2.30 crore beneficiaries have been enrolled under PMGDISHA so far. After the training, 1.34 crore have been duly certified by authorized 3rd party certifying agencies.
- Government has taken up several steps for proper implementation of the digital literacy scheme particularly in **remote rural areas** in the country, to make the rural India digitally empowered.

**Digital India**

- The vision was to “transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.”
- With multiple processes the key focus areas were:
  - Digital infrastructure as a core utility to every citizen
  - E-governance and services on demand
  - Digital empowerment of citizens

**PMGDISHA**

- It is the scheme initiated under **Digital India Programme** to make six crore persons in **rural areas**, across States/UTs, digitally literate, reaching to around 40% of rural households by covering one member from every eligible household.
- The Scheme aims to **bridge the digital divide**, specifically targeting the rural population including the **marginalized sections of society** like Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Minorities, Below Poverty Line (BPL), women and differently-abled persons and minorities.
- **Purpose of the PMGDISHA:** India has the largest number of youth in the world in order to provide technical and digital training to these youths specially the youths from the backward or rural area this project is launched.
- **Priority would be given to:**
  - **Non-smart-phone users, Antyodaya households, college drop-outs, Participants of the adult literacy mission.**
  - Digitally illiterate school students from **class 9th to 12th** provided facility of Computer/ICT Training is not available in their schools.
- The identification of the beneficiaries would be carried out by **CSC-SPV in active collaboration with DeGS, Gram Panchayats, and Block Development Officers**. The list of such beneficiaries would be made available on the scheme portal.
- The implementation of the Scheme would be carried out under the overall supervision of **Ministry of Electronics and IT in active collaboration with States/UTs through their designated State Implementing Agencies, District e-Governance Society (DeGS), etc.**
- Digitally literate persons would be able to operate computers/digital access devices (like tablets, smart phones, etc.), send and receive emails, browse internet, access Government Services, search for information, undertaking cashless transactions, etc. and hence use IT to actively participate in the process of nation building.

**Other Initiatives launched by the Government of India to promote Digital Education**

- **Digilockers:** It is a "digital locker" service operated by the Government of India that enables Indian citizens to store certain **official documents on the cloud**. The service is aimed towards reducing the need to carry physical documents.
- **BHIM app:** It is an app to enable **digital payments**. BHIM app was used to facilitate 913 million transactions in 2017-18.



### 3 All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)

**Context:** Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report for 2018-19.

**About:**

- The survey, undertaken as an **annual, web-based, pan-India exercise** on the **status of Higher Education since 2010-11**, covers **all the Higher Educational Institutions** in the country.
- The survey collects data on **several parameters** like **teachers, student enrolment, programmes, examination results, education finance, infrastructure, etc.**
- The data collected under these parameters come handy for making **informed policy decisions and conducting research in education development.**
- The survey is **building a sound database**, which is getting updated **annually** as per information submitted by the institutions

**Highlights of AISHE Report 2018-19**

- Total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 37.4 million with 19.2 million male and 18.2 million female. **Female constitute 48.6% of the total enrolment.**
- **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** in Higher education in India is **3%**, which is calculated for **18-23** years of age group. **GER for male population is 26.3% and for females, it is 26.4%.** For **Scheduled Castes, it is 23% and for Scheduled Tribes, it is 17.2% as compared to the national GER of 26.3%.**
- **UP and Karnataka have more female enrolment** in higher education and the ratio of male students is higher than females on almost every level, except Certificate, Post Graduate and M.Phil. The **female enrolment in Karnataka and UP is 50.04% and 50% respectively.**
- **Maharashtra has recorded the second-highest student enrolment with roughly 54.95% male and 45.05% females.**
- **In Rajasthan, male enrollment number is higher as compared to the females.**
- **UG level student enrolment is 51% males and 49% females** across India.
- **The top 6 States** having highest student enrollment **are UP, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka and West Bengal.** However, when it comes to the total number of institutes, the state-wise ranking is different with UP (8077) at the top followed by Maharashtra (6662), Karnataka (5028), Rajasthan (3723), Andhra Pradesh (3540) and Tamil Nadu (3443).
- The above mentioned **6 states with the highest student enrolment have roughly 54.23%** of the total student enrolment in India
- **4,16,299 is the total number of teachers** out of which About: **8 per cent are male** teachers and **42.2 per cent are female** teachers. In **Bihar, 78.97 per cent are male teachers and 21.03 per cent are females.**

### 4 School Education Quality Index (SEQI)

**Context:** NITI Aayog releases School Education Quality Index (SEQI).

**About:**

- The School Education Quality Index (SEQI) was developed to evaluate the **performance of States and Union Territories (UTs) in the school education sector.**

- The index aims to bring an **outcomes focus** to education policy by providing States and UTs with a platform to identify their **strengths and weaknesses** and undertake requisite course corrections or policy interventions.
- In line with NITI Aayog's mandate to foster the spirit of competitive and cooperative federalism, the index strives to facilitate the **sharing of knowledge and best practices** across States and UTs.

### Index categories and Domains:

- SEQI is based on a set of indicators that measure the **overall effectiveness, quality and efficiency of the Indian school education system**.
- To facilitate like-to-like comparisons, States and UTs have been grouped as **Large States, Small States and Union Territories**. Within each of these groups, the indicator values have been appropriately scaled, normalized and weighted to generate an overall performance score and ranking for each State and UT.
- States and UTs are ranked on their **overall performance** in the reference year 2016-17, as well as on the change in their performance between the reference year and base year (2015-16). The rankings present incredible insights on the status of school education across States/UTs and their relative progress over time.

## 5 Performance Grading Index (PGI)

**Context:** Ministry of Human Resource and Development has launched 70 point Performance Grading Index (PGI) to assess the quality of school education provided by the states.

### • What is the purpose of the Index?

- ▶ The **primary purpose** is to identify the **areas of deficiency** in each state's school education system so that targeted interventions can be made at **every level** from pedagogy to teacher training.
- ▶ It encourages States and UTs to adopt certain practices like online recruitment and transfer of teachers, electronic attendance of students & teachers etc.

### • What are the main features of the Index?

- ▶ The Index will grade **all** States and UTs.
- ▶ It will be **online** and **all grading will be generated by the software** as was done during the pilot project with 10 indicators under **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA)**.
- ▶ It has 70 indicators divided into two categories namely :
- ▶ First category is **Outcome**, with four domains, viz Learning Outcomes, Access Outcomes, Infrastructure and Facilities Outcomes.
- ▶ The second category is About: **Governance processes** which cover attendance, teacher adequacy, administrative adequacy, training, accountability and transparency.

- **How is PGI related to NITI Aayog's School Education Quality Index (SEQI)?**: SEQI will be subset of PGI, and NITI Aayog will use **33 indicators** out of 70 indicators of PGI.
- **Department of School Education and Learning, MHRD** will provide the relevant data under PGI to the NITI Aayog for SEQI.
- States and UTs will therefore not provide any data separately to NITI Aayog for SEQI.

- ▶ The total weightage of all indicators is 1000 points: Each indicator has been given either 20 or 10 points based on the priority in terms of educational development.
- ▶ The grading system also envisages the **third party verification by international organisations** such as UNICEF etc.

## 6 Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) 2021

**Context:** India and OECD sign agreement to enable India's participation in Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) to be held in 2021.

### PISA

- It was introduced in **2000 by the OECD** to test the learning levels of **15-year-olds** in **reading, mathematics and science**. The test is carried out every **three years**.
- Students are assessed in reading, mathematics, science and collaborative problem-solving.
- Participation in PISA allows benchmarking performance against a wide range of countries.
- PISA uses **test items** aligned with **international benchmarks**. Test items are adapted to the local context and language, pilot tested and validated before being used for the test.
- OECD has agreed to contextualize the questions for Indian students.
- More than 80 countries, including 44 middle-income countries, have participated in the assessment since the first round of testing in 2000.
- The list of registered countries includes **Brazil, China (certain areas like Shanghai and Beijing) and countries from South-East Asia like Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam**.

## 7 Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS)

**Context:** Union HRD Minister launches the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS).

### About:

- The scheme has been launched by the **Ministry of Human Resources Development** for providing **industry apprenticeship opportunities** to the **general graduates** exiting in **April 2019** through the **National Apprenticeship Promotional Scheme (NAPS)**.
- It comprises of the initiatives of **three Central Ministries**, namely the **Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Labour & Employment** viz the **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)**, the **National Career Service (NCS)** and **introduction of BA/BSc/BCom (Professional) courses in the higher educational institutions**.
- The programme is conceived for students in **degree courses, primarily non-technical**, with a view to introduce **employable skills** into their learning, **promote apprenticeship** as integral to education and also **amalgamate employment** facilitating efforts of the Government into the education system so that clear pathways towards employment opportunities are available to students during and after their graduation.
- NAPS provides for placing of apprentices **upto 10%** of the total work force in every business/industry.

- The scheme will be implemented by the **Sector Skill Councils (SSCs)**.
- Under the NAPS scheme, **Central Government shares 25% of the stipend per month** subject to a **maximum of Rs.1500 p.m** during the period of the apprenticeship. Apart from that, an amount **upto Rs.7500 will be met towards basic training cost, where needed.**

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# HEALTH & FOOD SECURITY SCHEMES & INITIATIVES

1

## FEMALE HEALTH & HYGIENE PROGRAMMES - Khushi & Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin Initiatives

### Context:

- **Odisha government**, as part of its initiatives to **empower women**, has launched a scheme (**KHUSHI**) to provide **free sanitary napkins** to girls studying in **Classes 6 to 12** in **government and government-aided schools, across the state**.
- **'Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin'** initiative has two primary objectives to improve **accessibility** to basic hygiene product – sanitary pads and **create employment** opportunity to women.

### About:

- The idea of uplifting women through health and employability is being put into action by **oil marketing companies** (Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), as part of their **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity**.
- **'Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin' initiative**: Oil marketing companies will set up 100 manufacturing units at the Common Service Centres (CSC) of Odisha state.
- Each center will have the facility to produce 1,200 to 2,000 eco-friendly sanitary napkins every day. The **sanitary pads will be made using virgin wood pulp sheet, non-woven white sheet and a gel sheet, all biodegradable in nature, leaving minimal carbon footprint**.
- The average price of sanitary napkins available in the market today is around Rs. 8 per pad, whereas now with the launch of the SUVIDHA napkins at Rs. 2.50 per pad, this will go a long way in making the basic hygiene requirement aid for Women affordable for the underprivileged sections.

### Other initiatives of the government

- **SUVIDHA'** –100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin – under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (**PMBJP**).
- The affordable sanitary napkin will be available for Rs. 2.50 per pad at over 3200 **Janaushadhi Kendras** across India and would ensure **'Swachhta, Swasthya and Suidha'** for the underprivileged Women of India.
- This step has been taken by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**.
- Women in India still use unhygienic aids during menstrual period due to **non-affordability** of some of the popular brands of sanitary napkins available in the market today.

- Such unhygienic aids cause **fungal infections, Reproductive Tract Infection, Urinary Tract Infection, Cervical cancer and also make women vulnerable to infertility.**
- Moreover, the disposal of **non-biodegradable sanitary napkins** available today creates a huge environmental problem.
- **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** is implementing the Scheme for **Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene for Adolescent Girls** residing primarily in rural areas of the country.
- Adolescent girls are provided sanitary napkins at **subsidized rates** by **Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs)** within the community and through the platform of Government and Government aided school.
- ASHAs also provide adolescent girls **information on maintaining good menstrual hygiene, proper use of sanitary napkins and safe disposal by environmentally safe methods.**
- **Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation** has also developed **National Guidelines on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM).** This is an integral part of the **Swachh Bharat Mission Guidelines.**
- Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan**, activities such as Adolescent Health Awareness Programme for Girls, provision of separate toilets blocks for girls as part of schools and installation of incinerator machine and sanitary napkin & vending machine for girls at schools and girls hostels are undertaken for general hygiene management.
- **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** has **developed syllabus on health and physical education** for Classes I – XII as a follow up of National Curriculum Framework, 2005, which provides adequate space to menstrual hygiene.

## 2 Certified Open Defecation Free protocol (ODF++) under SBM

### Context:

- Recently, seven cities from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have been certified ODF++, under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban.
- The seven cities are **Indore, Khargone, Sahaganj, Ujjain, Bilai, Rajnandgaon and Ambikapur.**
- **What it means for the cities?**
  - ▶ The certification, an extension of the ODF protocol, means that **all** the faecal sludge and sewage in these cities is **treated scientifically** before discharge.
  - ▶ These cities have 100% of their faecal matter treated by sewage treatment plants or faecal sludge treatment plants.
  - ▶ They are **also free of open defecation and open urination**, with at least 25% of the community and public toilets in excellent condition.
  - ▶ These are the first cities to qualify under the government's new extended protocol to sustain gains made under the basic ODF protocol.
- **Why Open Defecation + and Open Defecation ++?**
  - ▶ To ensure the **sustainability** and **long term impact** of the ODF status.
  - ▶ **The SBM ODF+** and **SBM ODF++** protocols build upon the ODF protocol while keeping true to its provisions, so as to provide a platform for cities and towns to improve sanitation sustainability. The protocols are **incremental** in nature, and reflect on-ground realities present in India.

- **What are the difference between Open Defecation + and Open Defecation ++?**
  - ▶ Cities and towns that have already achieved ODF status as per the ODF protocol prescribed by **MoHUA** and are working towards ensuring sustainability of the ODF status to ensure proper maintenance of toilet **facilities are referred to as SBM ODF+**.
  - ▶ ODF ++ includes safe collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal of all faecal sludge and sewage besides the protocols of ODF+ in order to achieve safe sustainable sanitation for all. It is step further for enhanced sustainability of the sanitation in the cities.

### 3 Menstrual Hygiene Scheme

**Context:** Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) gave minutes of Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS) in the Parliament.

- **What is Menstrual Hygiene Scheme?**
  - ▶ Implemented by MoHFW since 2011, it aims to address the need of **menstrual hygiene** among adolescent girls residing primarily in **rural areas**.
  - ▶ A range of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material has been developed around MHS, using a **360 degree approach** to create awareness among adolescent girls About: safe & hygienic menstrual health practices. Awareness includes audio, video and reading materials for adolescent girls.
  - ▶ Under this scheme, funds are provided to States/UTs through **National Health Mission** for **decentralized** procurement of sanitary napkins packs for provision primarily to rural adolescent girls at a subsidized rate of Rs 6 for a pack of 6 napkins.
  - ▶ These napkins are procured at **subsidized rates** as per proposals received from the States and UTs in their Programme Implementation Plans.
  - ▶ The **ASHA** is responsible for **distribution, receiving an incentive @ Rs 1 per pack sold and a free pack of napkins every month for her own personal use**.
  - ▶ ASHA convenes monthly meetings at the **Aanganwadi Centres** or other such platforms for adolescent girls to focus on issue of menstrual hygiene and also serve as a platform to discuss other relevant sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues.
  - ▶ Job-aids for ASHAs and other field level functionaries for communicating with adolescent girls.

### 4 Measles Rubella Vaccination

#### Context

- The **New Delhi High Court** stopped the implementation of the '**Measles and Rubella Vaccine Immunization Campaign**' by the **Delhi government**.
- Around **70 schools in Mumbai city** continue to refuse the measles vaccination.

#### About:

- Court's order said that 'measles vaccination cannot be administered "forcibly" and without the consent of parents,' it introduced a dimension to vaccination — **the question of consent** — that had not been adequately dealt with earlier.
- **Government:** Consent in routine immunisation is implied because it is the parents or members of the family who bring the child to the hospital or healthcare centre. For public good and for a

vaccine that is tried and tested, there is ample evidence on safety and efficacy and something which is already a part of the universal immunisation programme, written consent should not be essential.

### What is MR vaccine?

- Measles-Rubella (MR) Vaccine was introduced in Universal Immunization Programme in 2017, as **Measles-Rubella combination vaccine** to provide protection against **congenital birth defects** caused by Rubella infection for children **aged between 9 months and 15 year**.
- It is a part of global efforts to **reduce illness and deaths** due to measles and rubella/ **Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)** in the country.
- Measles is a serious and **highly contagious disease** that can cause debilitating or fatal complications, including encephalitis, severe diarrhoea and dehydration, pneumonia, ear infections and permanent vision loss.
- The disease is **preventable** through **two doses of vaccine**.
- **CRS** is an important cause of severe birth defects. A woman infected with the rubella virus early in pregnancy has a 90% chance of passing the virus to her **foetus**. This can cause the death of the foetus, or CRS.
- MR vaccine is safe and effective, in use for over 40 years across 150 countries. The vaccine being given in the MR campaign is produced in India and is WHO prequalified.
- The same vaccine is being given in the routine **immunisation programme** of India and in neighbouring countries like **Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar**.
- Private practitioners in India have been giving measles-rubella (MR) or measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine to children for many years.

## 5 National Girl Child Day

**Context:** National Girl Child Day 2019 was celebrated on 24th of January all over the country.

### National Girl Child Day

- It is celebrated every year on January 24. **First initiated in 2008** by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, the National Girl Child Day aims to promote **awareness on a range of issues including education, health, and nutrition**.
- The **theme** of this year's celebration was **"Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow"**.

### Objectives

- To increase **awareness** against the **social stigma** and **discrimination** faced by girl.
- To generate awareness on the issue of **declining Child Sex Ratio** and create a **positive environment around valuing the girl child**.

### More on News

- National Girl Child day also marks the **anniversary of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' initiative**.
- **Haryana** was awarded for its **good performance** for the **'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' initiative** of the national government. **Rajasthan** was also included in the award for its improved performance.
- A booklet on **"Innovations under BBBP"** was also released on the occasion.
- **Ministry of Women & Child Development** has compiled 38 Innovative Activities from Districts across the country to set an example for other Districts.



- These interventions have been categorized according to **five themes**, which are **Survival, Protection, Education, Participation and Valuing Girls**.
- Other measures like the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Restraint Act 2006, Pre- Conception & Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC&PNDT) Act 1994, Domestic Violence Act 2009, POCSO Act 2012, etc were introduced to stop various injustices against the girl child.**
- Only 65.46 % of the female were found to be literate as against 82.14% of male, as per the 2011 census.

### **Dhanalakshmi**

**Launched by the Women and Child Development**, the scheme ensures that **basic needs** of the girl child such as immunization, birth registration and school maintenance are taken care of till **Class 8**.

### **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**

It was launched in **2015** to address the issue of **declining Child Sex Ratio**. It is a **tri-ministerial** effort of Ministries of **Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development**.

- The government, through schemes like '**Dhanalakshmi**', has introduced various measures to strengthen the status of the girl child in the society.

## **6**

### **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**

#### **Context:**

- The government is planning to conduct a survey on the **relevance and efficacy** of the '**Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana**' (PMMVY), a **cash-based maternity benefit scheme**.
- The survey will be conducted by an independent agency and will look at the "**relevance**" and implementation of the scheme.
- Enrolment under the scheme till **August 2018** was 8.6 million, which is 50% of the targeted population as per the government.

#### **Background**

- The Government has approved **Pan-India** implementation of **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**, a **Centrally Sponsored Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme**, on **05.2017** for implementation across the country with effect from **01.01.2017**.
- The scheme is implemented through **web based Management and Information System (MIS) Software**, viz. **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana-Common Application Software (PMMVY-CAS)**.
- **No impact assessment** study of the scheme is available now as the effective implementation of the scheme has just completed one year.

#### **Main features of the scheme**

- Under PMMVY, a cash incentive of **Rs. 5000** is being provided **directly in the account of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) for first living child** of the family subject to their fulfilling specific conditions relating to maternal and child health.
- The **eligible beneficiaries** would receive the **remaining cash incentives** as per approved norms towards **maternity benefit under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)** after **institutional delivery** so that on an average, a woman will get **Rs. 6000**.

- ▶ It also provides **grants-in-aid** to the **State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations** in a dedicated **Escrow account** for the purpose of **direct benefit transfer to the beneficiaries**.
- ▶ The focal point of implementation would be the **Anganwadi Centre (AWC)** and **ASHA/ ANM workers**.

## 7

## Important initiatives under Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

- **Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen**

- ▶ It was launched on **2nd October, 2014** to accelerate the efforts to achieve **universal sanitation coverage** in India and promote access to **safe sanitation** in India.
- ▶ The SBM aims at achieving an **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** nation by **2nd October, 2019**, a befitting tribute to **Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary**.
- ▶ The SBM identifies **behaviour change** as the primary and fundamental tool for the achievement of ODF outcomes.
- ▶ As a result, rural sanitation coverage has increased significantly from 38.7% at the launch of SBM (G) in 2014 to 96.88%, as on December 2018.

- **Swachhata Pakhwada**

- ▶ Launched in April 2016, **Swachhata Pakhwada** is inspired by vision to engage all Union Ministries and Departments in Swachhata-related activities.

- **Swachh Iconic Places (SIP):**

- ▶ **Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation (MDWS)** has undertaken a multi-stakeholder initiative focusing on cleanliness in 100 locations across the country, which is "iconic" due to their heritage, religious and/or cultural significance.

- **Satyagraha Se Swachhagraha**

- ▶ MDWS in coordination with the **Government of Bihar**, organized a week long **campaign "Satyagraha Se Swachhagraha"** in April, 2018,

- **GOBARdhan**

- ▶ MDWS launched the Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resource dhan or "GOBARdhan" scheme in April 2018, at Karnal, Haryana.
- ▶ The scheme is aimed at keeping villages clean while increasing the income of farmers and cattle owners by promoting local entrepreneurs to convert cattle dung, and other organic resources, to biogas and organic manure.

- **Swachh Bharat Summer Internship (SBSI)**

- ▶ Launched in association with the **Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**, aimed at engaging **college students and NYKS youth** with Swachhata work in villages during the summer vacation.

- **Swajal**

- ▶ It is a **community demand driven, decentralized, single village, preferably solar powered, mini PWS** programme for the 117 aspirational districts identified by **NITI Aayog**.

- ▶ **Gram Panchayats** in partnership with **rural communities and State sectoral agencies** would be involved in the execution of the scheme and also operate and maintain the scheme.
- ▶ The programme would also sustain ODF status.

## 8 Swachh Survekshan Programme

- Swachh Bharat Mission is aimed at ensuring **door-to-door garbage collection** and **proper disposal of municipal solid waste** in **all urban areas by 2019**.
- The mission seeks the **active participation** of various stakeholders including the **private sector** and the citizens for Swachh Bharat to become a mass movement.
- The **Union Ministry of Urban Development** is responsible for achieving the objectives of Swachh Bharat Mission in urban cities and towns.
- **Swachh Survekshan** was started in **2016 by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** to rank and recognize the performance of cities on sanitation and solid waste management (SWM).
- The idea was that such a ranking would instill a sense of competitiveness among cities and thus improve **waste management** practices across the country.

## 9 Swachh Survekshan League 2020

**Context:** Recently, government released the Swachh Survekshan League in New Delhi.

### About:

- **Swachh Survekshan League 2020 (SS League 2020)** was launched by **Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India**.
- **Objective:** SS League 2020 was introduced with the objective of **sustaining the on-ground performance** of cities along with continuous monitoring of service level performance when it comes to cleanliness.
- **SS 2020 parameters:** The focus of the survey was on **waste water treatment, faecal sludge management**.
- The survey **also focused** on **implementation of ODF+, water plus and ODF+ and ODF++ protocols of the ministry of housing and urban affairs**.
- **Results:** In the category of 10 lakh plus population, **Indore secured first place**. Indore has remained in first place for the last three years.
- Following Indore, **Bhopal and Surat are in second and third places respectively**.
- In the category of population between one lakh and 10 lakhs, Jamshedpur was in 1st spot following New Delhi and Khargone.
- **Swachh Survekshan (Cleanliness survey)** is an annual survey of cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation in cities and towns across India.

## 10 Darwaza Band -Part 2

**Context:** Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen launched the 'Darwaza Band -Part 2' campaign focusing on sustaining the open defecation free status of villages across the country.

- **What is Darwaza Band Campaign?**

- ▶ Darwaza Band was launched in May 2017, to promote **toilet use and freedom from open defecation across the country's villages.**
- ▶ The campaign is under the **Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation**, and has been supported by **the World Bank.**
- ▶ **Amitabh Bachchan** is the brand Ambassador of this campaign.
- ▶ It aimed at **behavioural change** that has been the focus of Swachh Bharat Mission
- ▶ It focuses on the need to shift people's paradigm from **'open' to 'closed' especially for men**

## 11 Global Fund for AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis

**Context:** Recently, Government of India hosted a high level preparatory meeting for the Sixth Replenishment Conference of the "Global Fund". During the meet various stakeholders vowed for collective action to end AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

### More on News

- The conference is aimed at **raising funds to fight the diseases** and build stronger systems for health for the next three years.
- To achieve **SDG 3 and end HIV, TB and malaria as epidemics**, the world needs to step up total funding from all sources, particularly from national governments.
- The **Government of India** and the **Global Fund partnership** has been a unique one, with India receiving and making **financial and concurrent technical support** from donors and partners since 2002.
- India has pledged to increase India's health spending to **2.5 percent of GDP by 2025** to pay for ambitious health reforms, including expanding primary care and delivering universal health coverage.
- It was reiterated that India, which has the world's largest TB epidemic, has set the ambitious goal of ending TB by 2025, five years ahead of the targets set in the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **France** will host the Global Fund's Sixth Replenishment Conference in **Lyon in October 2019.**

## 12 Global Influenza Strategy for 2019-2030

**Context:** *The World Health Organization has launched a strategy to protect people worldwide over the next decade against the threat of influenza.*

- **Global Influenza Strategy for 2019-2030:**

- ▶ It aims at protecting people in **all countries** from the threat of **influenza.**
- ▶ The goal of the strategy is to **prevent seasonal influenza, control the spread of influenza from animals to humans, and prepare for the next influenza pandemic.**
- ▶ The new strategy outlines a path to **protect populations every year** and **helps prepare for a pandemic through strengthening routine programmes.**
- ▶ It has two overarching goals:
  - Build **stronger country** capacities for **disease surveillance and response, prevention and control, and preparedness.** To achieve this, it calls for every country to have a

**tailored influenza programme** that contributes to **national and global preparedness** and health security.

- Develop better tools to **prevent, detect, control and treat influenza**, such as more **effective vaccines, antivirals and treatments**, with the goal of making these accessible for all
- ▶ The strategy meets one of WHO's mandates to **improve core capacities for public health**, and **increase global preparedness** and was developed through a consultative process with input from **Member States, academia, civil society, industry, and internal and external experts**.

### **Influenza:**

- Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is an infectious disease caused by an **influenza virus**. Symptoms can be **mild to severe**.
- It remains one of the world's greatest public health challenges.
- Three of **the four** types of influenza viruses affect humans: **Type A, Type B, and Type C**.
- **Type D** has **not been known to infect humans**, but is believed to have the potential to do so.
- WHO recommends **annual influenza vaccination** as the most effective way to prevent influenza. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of serious influenza complications and for health care workers.
- Every year across the globe, there are an estimated 1 billion cases, of which 3 to 5 million are severe cases, resulting in 290 000 to 650 000 influenza-related respiratory deaths.

## **13 Poshan Abhiyaan - Eat Right Campaign**

**Context:** 'Eat Right campaign' was kick-started by Health Minister. It is a primary component of Poshan Abhiyaan and other health schemes.

### **About:**

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) was launched in 2018 by the Prime Minister in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan.**
- It **targets to reduce level of under-nutrition and other related problems** by ensuring convergence of various nutrition related schemes
- It also **targets stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and low birth rate.**
- It will **monitor and review implementation of all such schemes** and utilize existing structural arrangements of line ministries wherever available.
- Its large component involves **gradual scaling-up of interventions supported by on-going World Bank assisted Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Project (ISSNIP)** to all districts in the country by 2022.
- Its vision is to ensure attainment of **malnutrition free India by 2022.**

### **Implementation and Strategy**

- **The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing** POSHAN Abhiyaan in 315 districts in first year, 235 districts in second year and remaining districts will be covered in the third year.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan is **rolled out in three phases from 2017-18 to 2019-20.**

- Implementation strategy would be based on **intense monitoring and Convergence Action Plan** right up to the grass root level.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan targets to **reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia** (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively. Although the target to reduce Stunting is at least 2% p.a., Mission would strive to achieve reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (Mission 25 by 2022).

## 14 National Nutrition Survey

**Context:** India conducted its first ever comprehensive National Nutrition Survey through the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in partnership with United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) to measure the level of malnutrition in India.

- **About the survey:**

- ▶ **CDSA – Clinical Development Services Agency** was selected as the **monitoring agency** for the aforementioned survey.
- ▶ The survey covered more than 1,20,000 covering both children and adolescents in rural and urban area. The survey was conducted over **a period of two years** (2016-2018)
- ▶ It aimed to assess the following:
  - Micro nutrient deficiencies
  - Sub clinical inflammation
  - Overweight or obesity
  - Cardio – metabolic risks

### Key findings of the Survey:-

The survey for the first time found existence of 'Burden of double malnutrition' i.e. coexistence of under nutrition along with overweight, obesity or diet-related Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs), within individuals, households and populations, and across the life-course.

- **Prevalence of stunting** – In the survey over 35% of Indian children aged 0-4 were found stunted. Rural areas had 37% of stunted children in comparison to 27% in urban areas.
- **Breastfeeding** –Breastfeeding is inversely proportional to household wealth. A higher proportion of children (12-15 months) residing in rural areas are breastfed (85%) compared to children in urban areas (76%).
- **Obesity** - 14.5% of children in the age group of 5 to 9 years in urban areas have higher Subscapular Skinfold Thickness (SSFT) than 5.3% in rural areas. Subscapular Skinfold Thickness (SSFT) is a non-invasive method of body fat estimation.
- **Deficiencies – Zinc deficiency** is more prevalent in **rural children** in comparison to their counter parts in urban areas. Alternatively **urban children** are deficient in **Iron and vitamin D** in comparison to rural children, due to a better performance of the government's health programmes in rural areas.

## 15 UMMID initiative

**Context:** The Union Ministry for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, launched UMMID (Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders) initiative and inaugurated NIDAN (National Inherited Diseases Administration) Kendras.

- **About UMMID:**

- The **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** has started the UMMID (**Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders**) Initiative which is designed on the concept of '**Prevention is better than Cure**'.
- **UMMID aims** to create awareness About: genetic disorders amongst clinicians to establish **molecular diagnostic** in hospitals.

- **Goals of UMMID initiative:**

- ▶ To establish **NIDAN (National Inherited Diseases Administration) Kendras** to provide **counselling, prenatal testing and diagnosis, management, and multidisciplinary care** in Government Hospitals wherein the influx of patients is more.
- ▶ To produce **skilled clinicians** in Human Genetics.
- ▶ To undertake **screening of pregnant women** and **new born babies** for **inherited genetic diseases** in hospitals at **aspirational districts**.

## 16 Ayushman Bharat Scheme

**Context:**

- The government has set up committees of over 300 leading doctors from across the country to review the cost of nearly 1,300 medical packages under the **Ayushman Bharat Scheme**.
- The committees would recommend which packages can be revised downward or upward. There are some packages which are priced on the lower side; some are on the higher side.

**Ayushman Bharat**

- This scheme is assumed to be giant leap towards providing **accessible and affordable** health care to the common man.
- **Ayushman Bharat** has labelled as the **largest health scheme in the world**, benefiting over 10 lakh patients since its launch, and created an **atmosphere of positivity**.
- With PMJAY, the government is taking healthcare protection to a new aspirational level. This would be the **world's largest government funded healthcare** program targeting more than 50 crore beneficiaries.
- PMJAY primarily targets the **poor, deprived rural families and identified occupational category** of urban workers' families as per the latest **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC)** data for both **rural and urban areas**.
- PMJAY will be an **entitlement based scheme** where it will be decided on the **basis of deprivation criteria** in the **SECC database**.

**Features of the Ayushman Bharat Scheme**

- The scheme has created a **network of health and wellness infrastructure** across the nation (for primary health care services).

- Beneficiaries of health insurance under the scheme will include **50 crore economically weak citizens of India** as defined in the **social, economic and ethnic census 2011 database**. It will cover both rural (8.03 crore) and urban (2.33 crore) families.
- Ayushman Bharat** subsumed the existing **Rashtriya Sawasthya Bima Yojna**, launched in 2008 and the Senior Citizens Health Insurance Scheme.
- It will provide a benefit cover of Rs 5 lakh/year/family.
- Expenses incurred will be shared between **Centre and States** in **60:40** ratio.
- The Government aims to open 5 lakh health and wellness centre by 2022 that will be equipped to treat various diseases.
- Ayushman Bharat will take care of **secondary care and tertiary care procedures** and also **cover pre and post-hospitalisation expenses**.
- Cashless benefits** will be allowed from any public or private empanelled hospitals. Such empanelled hospitals will have '**Ayushman Mitra**' to assist patients.
- Benefits can be availed from any place in India and no hospital can refuse treatment under this scheme.
- The Scheme is **principle based** rather than rule based, allowing States enough flexibility in terms of packages, procedures, and scheme design, entitlements as well as other guidelines.
- States can implement the Scheme through an **insurance company** or **directly through the Trust/Society/Implementation Support Agency or a mixed approach**.

## 17 Ayushman Bharat -Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

**Context:** Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana was launched to provide health cover up to Rs. 5 lakh per family per annum for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation to around 10.74 crore poor and vulnerable families based on the deprivation and occupational criteria as per the Socio-Economic Caste Census.

### About:

- The scheme provides for **paperless and cashless access** to services for the beneficiary at the point of service i.e. empanelled public and private hospitals across India.
- To facilitate this, an **online transaction** management system has been adopted by States/UTs.
- Claims of the hospitals are also settled through online portal in a **time-bound manner**.

### Salient Features of Ayushman Bharat -Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme**. It is entirely funded by Government and the funding is shared between Centre and State governments as per prevailing guidelines of **Ministry of Finance**.
- PMJAY provides health cover up to Rs. 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalization to around 10.74 crore poor and vulnerable families (approx. 50 crore beneficiaries).
- PMJAY is an **entitlement based scheme**. This scheme covers poor and vulnerable families based on deprivation and occupational criteria as per SECC database.
- PMJAY provides cashless and paperless access to services for the beneficiary at the point of service in any (both public and private) empanelled hospitals across India. In other words, a beneficiary from one State can avail benefits from an empanelled Hospital anywhere in the Country.



- Under PMJAY, the States are **free to choose the modalities for implementation**. They can implement the scheme through **insurance company or directly through the Trust/ Society or mixed model**.
- There is **no restriction on family size**, ensuring all members of designated families specifically girl child and senior citizens get coverage.
- **A well-defined Complaint and Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism**, has been put in place through which complaints/ grievances are registered, acknowledged, escalated for relevant action, resolved and monitored.
- PMJAY has created a **robust IT system for implementation** and role of real time transaction data.
- At National level, National Health Authority (NHA) has been set up as an attached office to **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** to manage the implementation of the scheme.

## 18 AYUSH System

**Context:** Ministry of AYUSH is taking various initiatives in promotion and integration of Indian AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) System with modern system to increase their acceptability as scientific and reliable alternative system of medicine.

### Background

- Earlier the Ministry of AYUSH, which was formed in 2014, was known as the Department of Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H) and renamed as Department of AYUSH in 2003.
- AYUSH is one of the 12 champion services sectors that the government seeks to promote by offering soft loans and interest subsidies to AYUSH establishments as well as allowing 100 per cent foreign direct investment.

### Objectives

- To **upgrade the educational standards of Indian Systems of Medicines and Homoeopathy colleges in the country**.
- To strengthen **existing research institutions** and to **ensure a time-bound research programme on identified diseases** for which these systems have an effective treatment.
- To draw up schemes for **promotion, cultivation and regeneration** of medicinal plants used in these systems.
- To evolve **Pharmacopoeia standards for Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy drugs**.

## 19 Mapping of Child Care Institutions Report

### Context

- **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has released full report of the pan-India survey titled 'Mapping and Review Exercise of Child Care Institutions'.
- The survey was conducted by **Childline India Foundation and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)**.

### About:

- The report highlights the **poor safety and security measures, inadequate monitoring and a lack of effort to trace parents of missing children** sent to these homes as major lacunas of the existing shelter homes.

- The detailed report shows that **only 46.7%** of the total homes had adequate number of caregivers per child
- **Only 28.7% centres** were able to tend to inmates showing signs of hunger or illness and 65.9% of homes were able to actively supervise children under trauma.
- The report also says that the lack of infrastructure facilities is “glaring” and finds that more than 1,000 homes did not have a dormitory for children, raising questions About: sleeping arrangements made for them.
- Only 19.3% of CCIs made an effort to trace **the biological parents** of a rescued child. Similarly, a mere 18.32% of the homes made an effort to file an FIR in case of missing children reported to it.
- Only 37.21% centres maintained records of a child being reunited with his or her family, such as a letter from a parent or a guardian with an identity proof.
- Children of single parents constituted a third of the total number of total children in homes, accounting for 1,20,118 children. This number is **largest** than any of the categories including orphaned or those surrendered by their parents.
- According to the report many child care institutions (CCIs) recorded a poor rate of producing a child before the CWC, ranging from no such cases in **Manipur through 17% in Kerala, 32 % in Uttar Pradesh to 48% in Sikkim and 50% in Uttarakhand.**

### National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

- It is a **statutory body** under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005 under the administrative control of **the Ministry of Women & Child Development.**
- The Commission’s mandate is to ensure that **all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms** are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The Commission visualizes **a rights-based perspective** flowing into National Policies and Programmes, along with nuanced responses at the State, District and Block levels, taking care of specificity and strengths of each region.

### Childline India Foundation

- It is the nodal agency of the **Union Ministry of Women and Child Development** acting as the parent organisation for setting up, managing and monitoring the **CHILDLINE 1098** service all over the country.
- **CIF is the sole agency/body responsible for establishing the CHILDLINE service in the cities/districts** of the country, monitoring of service delivery and finance, training, research and documentation, creating awareness, advocacy as well as resource generation for the service.

## One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

**Context:** One nation one ration card scheme was launched on a pilot basis in four states- Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

### ‘One Nation One Ration Card’ scheme

- Launched by **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.**
- It will be available across the country from **July 1, 2020.**
- The main objective is to introduce **nation-wide portability** of ration card holders under **National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)**

- It will allow **portability of food security benefit** to lift their entitlement food grains from any Fair Price Shop in the country
- This means **poor migrant workers** will be able to buy subsidised rice and wheat **from any ration shop in the country**, so long as their ration cards are **linked to Aadhaar**.
- It would **integrate** the existing PDS systems/portals of States/UTs with the Central systems/portals.

## 21 National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)

The **National Food Security Act, 2013** was enacted to provide **for food and nutritional security** in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.

- It provides for coverage of up to **75% of the rural population** and up to **50% of the urban population** for receiving subsidized food grains under **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**.
- The eligible persons will be entitled to receive **5 kgs of food grains per person per month** at subsidized prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.
- To ensure the food security of poorest of poor, the existing **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** households will continue to receive **35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month**.
- **Pregnant women and lactating mothers** are entitled to a nutritious “take home ration” of 600 Calories, 18-20 grams of protein and a maternity benefit of at least Rs 6,000 for six months.
- The **eldest women of the household of age 18 years or above** will be the **head** of the household for the purpose of issuing ration cards.
- **Children 6 months to 14 years of age** are to receive free hot meals or “take home rations”.
- **States are the implementing agencies** and the **Central Government** will be responsible to provide funds to states in case of **short supplies of food grains**.

## 22 Universal Public Distribution System (PDS)

**Universal Public Distribution System (PDS)** was introduced in **India in 1965** to improve the health conditions and provide food grains to common people at affordable prices. It served the aim of

- Maintaining **stability in the prices** of essential commodities across regions
- Keeping a check on **private trade, hoarding and black-marketing**.

### Targeted PDS (TPDS)

- The PDS was converted into **Targeted PDS (TPDS) in 1997**
- It classified population into **Above Poverty Line (APL)** and **Below Poverty Line (BPL)**
- **Only those households classified as BPL** was made eligible for subsidized purchase of commodities from the ration shops.

But the **poorest of poor, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households** will continue to receive **35 Kgs of foodgrains** per household per month.

## 23 Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019

**Context:** A new report, 'Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019', authored by the Government of India and the UNWFP has been released.

### Status of Nutrition coverage in India

- Malnutrition, in all its forms, includes **undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight) inadequate vitamins or minerals, overweight, obesity, and resulting diet-related non-communicable diseases.**
- India has long been home to the **largest** number of malnourished children in the world. The highest levels of stunted and underweight children are found in **Jharkand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.** Some progress has been made in reducing the extent of malnutrition.
- United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP)**, paints a picture of hunger and malnutrition amongst children in large pockets of India.
- The report shows the **poorest sections of society** caught in a trap of poverty and malnutrition, which is being passed on from generation to generation.
- Malnutrition:** The proportion of children with chronic malnutrition decreased from 48% percent in 2005-06 to 38.4% in 2015-16.
- Underweight:** The percentage of underweight children decreased from 42.5% to 35.7% over the same period.
- Anaemia:** Anaemia in young children decreased from 69.5% to 58.5% during this period.
- Stunting:** In India over 40% of children from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are stunted. Close to 40% of children from the Other Backward Classes are stunted.

### UN World Food Programme

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food assistance branch of the United Nations, established in 1961.
- It is the **world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.**
- The WFP strives to **eradicate hunger and malnutrition**, with the ultimate goal in mind of eliminating the need for food aid itself.
- It is a member of the United Nations Development Group and part of its Executive Committee.
- The WFP operations are **funded by voluntary donations from world governments, corporations and private donors.**
- WFP food aid is also directed to fight micronutrient deficiencies, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat disease, including HIV and AIDS and derive Zero Hunger by 2030.

### Important Definitions

- Stunting:** Calculation is based on height-for-age. It is associated with an underdeveloped brain, poor learning capacity, and increased nutrition-related diseases.
- Wasting:** Calculated by weight-for-height. It is associated with decreased fat mass. Also known as wasting syndrome, it causes muscle and fat tissue to waste away.
- Underweight:** Calculated by the weight-for-age formula. It is a body weight considered to be too low to be healthy. It can reflect both stunting and wasting.

## 24 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019 report

### Context:

- The **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019 report**, released by the **UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, estimated that 820 million people worldwide did not have enough to eat in 2018, up from 811 million in the previous year.
- At the same time, the number of overweight individuals and obesity continue to increase in all regions

### Highlights of the Report

- The 2019 edition of this report continues to signal that significant challenges remain in the **fight against food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms**.
- The number of obese adults in India has risen by a fourth in four years, from 24.1 million in 2012 to 32.8 million in 2016, while the country's undernourished population has dropped by roughly the same fraction in 12 years, from 253.9 million in 2004-06 to 194.4 million in 2016-18.
- **Hunger is on the rise in almost all African subregions**, making Africa the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment.
- **Hunger is also slowly rising in Latin America and the Caribbean**, while **Western Asia shows a continuous increase since 2010**, with more than 12 % of its population is undernourished.
- **The report has a section on economic growth in China and India, and its effect on poverty**. Between 1990 and 2017, the two countries had an average GDP per capita growth rate of 8.6 % and 4.5 % respectively.
- In both countries, the increase in GDP per capita has been accompanied by poverty reduction. While China's poverty rate declined from 88 % in 1981 to 0.7 % in 2015, India's poverty reduction appeared to be relatively more modest, moving from 48.9 % in 1987 to 21.2 % in 2011, or to 13.4 % in 2015.

### State of Food Security and Nutrition Report

- This joint report is issued annually by the **FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization**.
- It presents the latest estimates on **food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition at the global and regional levels**.
- The report calls for action to **safeguard food security and nutrition through economic and social policies** that help counteract the **effects of such slowdowns and downturns** including **guaranteeing funding of social safety nets and ensuring universal access to health and education**.
- It calls for action, as well, to tackle inequalities at all levels through **multi-sectoral** policies making it possible to more sustainably avert food insecurity and malnutrition.

## 25 Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh

**Context:** Recently, Government launched 'Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh' to tackle the problem of malnutrition in India.

### About:

- The Union Government has launched '**Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh**' (**BPKK**) with the aim of **reducing malnutrition** in India.
- BPKK is a repository of **diverse crops across 128 agro-climatic zones** to help enable better nutritional outcomes.

- As part of **Poshan Abhiyaan**, Union **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has **partnered with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** for the Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh project.
- **India's first Poshan Atlas**: BPKK would be accessible to policy-makers, administrators, experts and communities in order to help meet nutritional outcomes in the country.

### Objective:

- The Kosh aims to promote and reinforce **healthy dietary practices** both at the individual and community level and **tackle malnutrition in a sustainable manner**.
- **BPKK database** will provide **insights on traditional crop varieties** & encourage them in a particular region to promote dietary diversity.
- This is a step forward in the direction of '**Evergreen Revolution**' that will bring together the nutritional needs of citizens with India's cropping patterns and agricultural production.

## 26 Food Fortification

**Context:** To tackle the menace of Malnutrition, NITI Aayog seeks creation of roadmap by Department of Food and Public Distribution for taking the Rice Fortification Pilot Scheme Pan India.

### About:

- The government, in February this year, had approved centre-sponsored pilot scheme on "**Fortification of Rice and its Distribution under Public Distribution System**".
- Under this scheme **rice is fortified with Iron, Folic Acid and Vitamin B-12**. The Pilot Scheme had been approved for a period of three year beginning 2019-20.
- Under the budget a total Rs 42.65 crore had been allocated.
- Currently, the scheme focuses **on 15 districts preferably 1 district per State during the initial phase of implementation**.
- The operational responsibilities for implementation of the pilot scheme lie with states which fortifies the rice for distribution through **Public Distribution System (PDS)**.
- This scheme will **now be implemented across the country**.

### Need for rice fortification

- 67 % of population in India consumes rice (NSSO, 68th round).
- Rice forms a large source of calories and core component of agriculture and nutrition in most of India.
- Milling of **rice removes the fat and micronutrient rich bran layers** to produce the commonly consumed starch white rice.
- Polishing further removes 75-90% of **Vitamin B- 1, Vitamin B-6, Vitamin-E and Niacin**.

### Food fortification in India

- Fortification is the **addition of key vitamins and minerals** such as **iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods** such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content. These nutrients may or may not have been originally present in the food before processing.
- India's National Nutritional strategy, 2017, had listed food fortification as one of the interventions to address anaemia, vitamin A and iodine deficiencies apart from supplementation and dietary diversification.

- Malnutrition is a prominent issue in India — **38 per cent of children under five years are stunted** i.e. too short for their age, **36 per cent are underweight** and **21 per cent are wasted** i.e. too thin for their height, which is a sign of acute under-nutrition.
- **59 per cent women and 53 per cent children are anaemic.**
- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** made standards for fortification in the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018, for five staples — **wheat, rice, milk, oil and salt.**
- The standards are given for **wheat and rice fortification with iron, folic acid, and vitamin B12**, the **deficiency of which cause anaemia.** Besides, **other B vitamins** are also added.
- Standards are provided for **oil and milk fortification with vitamin A and vitamin D**, the deficiency of which cause **night blindness and rickets** respectively; and **salt fortification with iron** along with **iodine to prevent goitre.**
- The food companies who wish to add micronutrients to these staples sold in the packages will also have to follow the standards set by FSSAI. If the product is fortified according to the standards, the package **will carry an F+ label.**
- The **Union Ministries of Women and Child Development, Human Resource Development and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution** have mandated the **distribution of fortified wheat flour, rice, oil and double fortified salt in their schemes — Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) and Public Distribution System (PDS) respectively.**

### **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been established **under Food Safety and Standards , 2006** which consolidates various acts & orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.
- FSSAI has been created **for laying down science based standards** for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

### **Highlights of the Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006**

- Various central Acts like Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, Fruit Products Order, 1955, Meat Food Products Order, 1973, Vegetable Oil Products (Control) Order, 1947, Edible Oils Packaging (Regulation) Order 1988, Solvent Extracted Oil, De- Oiled Meal and Edible Flour (Control) Order, 1967, Milk and Milk Products Order, 1992 etc **have been repealed after commencement of FSS Act, 2006.**
- The Act aims to establish a **single reference point for all matters** relating to food safety and standards, by moving from multi- level, multi- departmental control to a single line of command.
- The Act thus **establishes an independent statutory Authority** - the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India** with head office at Delhi.
- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the State Food Safety Authorities enforce various provisions of the Act.

## **27 National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey**

**Context:** Recently, Union Health Minister released the National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey 2019.

**About:**

- The survey was conducted by the **AIIMS, Delhi and Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- The survey was conducted between **2015 and 2019**.
- The survey was conducted in 31 districts of 24 states and the results were **extrapolated** for the entire country.
- India is the **first country to launch National Program for Control of Blindness in 1976**. The aim of the program is to reduce the blindness prevalence to 0.3% by 2020.
- **Key findings of the report**
- **Cataract is the leading cause of blindness** in people above 50 years, according to the survey.
- The prevalence of blindness in India is **99%**.
- Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh has the highest population suffering from blindness.
- Around 3.67% of the districts are blind and 21.82% suffer visual impairment.
- **Blindness is more pronounced among illiterates as compared to literates**. Around 3.23% illiterates are blind and 0.43% literates are blind.
- Blindness is more prevalent **in rural population (2.14%) as compared to urban (1.8%)**
- Approximately 93% of cases of blindness and 96.2% visual impairment cases in this age group were avoidable.

**28****SAANS aims to reduce child mortality due to Pneumonia**

**Context:** Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare launched SAANS, a campaign aimed at reducing child mortality due to pneumonia.

**About:**

- SAANS, short for '**Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully**
- It is launched to **mobilise people** to protect children from **pneumonia**, and train health personnel and other stakeholders to provide **prioritised treatment to control the disease**.
- As per **Health Management Information System (HMIS) data**, **under-five mortality** rate in the country is 37 per 1000 live births, of which 5.3 deaths are caused due to pneumonia.
- The government aims to achieve a target of reducing pneumonia deaths among **children to less than three per 1,000 live births by 2025**
- **The HMIS data for 2018-19 ranked Gujarat second in the number of child deaths due to pneumonia, after Madhya Pradesh.**

**29****Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)**

**Context:** The Accessible India Campaign also known as the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan was launched in 2015 by Prime Minister. The project that aimed to make the country accessible for people with disabilities is yet to meet its target. The government has announced that deadline of Accessible India campaign has been extended.



**About:**

- Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) is a **nation-wide Campaign** launched by **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment** to provide universal accessibility to persons with disabilities.
- The campaign aims at providing **equal opportunity** to persons with disabilities to participate in **all** the aspects of life and live independently.
- The Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan focuses on **developing accessible physical environment, transportation system and Information & communication ecosystem.**
- The Government of India with firm commitment towards socio-economic transformation of the persons with disabilities is making efforts to create mass awareness for universal accessibility.
- India is a signatory to the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).**

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# SOCIAL SECURITY, POVERTY ELIMINATION, EMPLOYMENT GENERATION & SKILL DEVELOPMENT

## 1 Second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts Programme

### Context

- NITI Aayog has released the second delta ranking of the **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)**.
- The ranking measured the incremental progress made by districts between June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018.

### About::

- The programme focuses on 5 Main Themes- **Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure**, which have direct bearing on the quality of life and economic productivity of citizens.

### What is Aspirational Districts programme?

It aims to expeditiously improve the socio-economic status of 115 districts from across 28 states. The three core principles are - **Convergence** (of Central & State Schemes), **Collaboration** (among citizens and functionaries of Central & State Governments including district teams), and **Competition** among districts.

### How will the progress of these districts be monitored?

- **Real-time monitoring & ranking with 49** key performance indicators (81 data points) have been identified across 5 themes, in consultation with Ministries.
- The dashboard is designed, developed, and maintained by the Planning Department of the **Government of Andhra Pradesh**.
- The ranking of districts is dynamic and would reflect the **incremental (delta)** improvement made month on month.

## 2 SDG India Index 2019

**Context:** NITI Aayog has released the second edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index, which comprehensively documents the progress made by India's States and Union Territories towards achieving the 2030 SDG targets.

**About:**

- The SDG India Index—which has been developed in collaboration with the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), United Nations in India, and Global Green Growth Institute—was launched by NITI Aayog.**
- NITI Aayog has committed itself to building capacities and monitoring progress at the state level.
- Close coordination with the states over the **next 5 years** will further accelerate SDG localization and ensure greater improvement.
- **In 2020, the world enters the final decade for achieving the SDGs—the ‘Decade for Action’.** And the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tells us that we have 12 years left to save the planet from the worst effects of climate change.

### 3 Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)

**Context**

- **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)** has been rolled out by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment.**
- The scheme was announced in the Interim Budget. As many as 42 crore workers are estimated to be engaged in the unorganized sector of the country.
- **Who are eligible to this scheme?**
  - ▶ **The unorganised workers** mostly engaged as home based workers, street vendors, mid-day meal workers, head loaders, brick kiln workers etc 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.**
- **What are the benefits that a subscriber will receive?**
  - ▶ Each subscriber under the PM-SYM, shall receive minimum **assured pension of Rs 3000/- per month after attaining the age of 60 years.**
  - ▶ During the receipt of pension, if the subscriber dies, the **spouse of the beneficiary shall be entitled to receive 50% of the pension** received by the beneficiary as family pension. **Family pension is applicable only to spouse.**
  - ▶ If a beneficiary has given regular contribution and died due to any cause (before age of 60 years), 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.
- **How much a subscriber has to contribute?**
  - ▶ The subscriber’s contributions to PM-SYM shall be made through **‘auto-debit’ facility** from his/ her **savings bank account/ Jan- Dhan account.**
  - ▶ The subscriber is required to contribute the prescribed contribution amount from the age of joining PM-SYM till the age of 60 years.
  - ▶ PM-SYM 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 as per the chart.

- ▶ For example, if a person enters the scheme at an age of 29 years, he is required to contribute Rs 100/- per month till the age of 60 years. An equal amount of Rs 100/- will be contributed by the Central Government.

## 4 SWAYATT and GeM Start-up Runway

**Context:** Ministry of Commerce & Industry launched SWAYATT and also dedicated GeM Start-up Runway-an initiative of Government e Marketplace (GeM).

- **SWAYATT**

- ▶ It is an initiative to promote **Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage Through e-Transactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM)**.
- ▶ It will bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to Government e-Marketplace the national procurement portal.

- **GeM Start-up Runway**

- ▶ It is an initiative of GeM in **association with Start-up India** is to facilitate Start-ups registered under it to access the **public procurement market** and sell innovative products and services to government buyers.
- ▶ GeM, an **online market place** for procurement of **common use goods and services** by government ministries, departments and CPSEs was setup in 2016.

## 5 National Rural Economic Transformation Project

### Context

- The Union Cabinet approved the implementation of an externally aided project namely **National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP)**.
- It will be implemented under the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) through loan assistance (IBRD Credit) from World Bank**.

### About:

The development objective of the NRETP for India is to establish efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor to enable them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements, and improved access to financial and selected public services.

- **The additional financing will bring following changes:**

- ▶ The project will **co-locate** areas for investment with those selected under mission Antyodaya
- ▶ The project will update the following components-
  - Institutional and human capacity development
  - State livelihood support
  - Innovation and partnership support

### **Aajeevika - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)**

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Rural Development** in **June 2011**.
- Aided in part through investment support by the **World Bank**, the Mission aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor.
- It is enabling them to **increase household income** through **sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services**.
- NRLM set out with an agenda to cover 7 Crore rural poor households, across 600 districts, 6000 blocks, 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats and 6 lakh villages in the country through self-managed Self Help Groups (SHGs) and federated institutions and support them for livelihoods collectives in a period of 8-10 years.
- In addition, the poor would be facilitated to achieve increased access to rights, entitlements and public services, diversified risk and better social indicators of empowerment.
- **In November 2015, the program was renamed Deendayal Antayodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM).**

## **6 Review of Ujjwala Scheme**

**Context:** More than 7.23 crore connections have been provided to poor families under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) against the target of 8 crore connections.

### **About:**

- **Uttar Pradesh topped** the list and provided 64,76,981 connections, followed by **Madhya Pradesh** with 31,30,613 connections.
- A sum of 12,800 crore has been earmarked for the PMUY scheme.
- Earlier in this year, a survey was conducted, which revealed that 98% of households had an LPG connection but also used a **chulha** (an earthen stove that uses solid fuel).
- The study supports other survey data on rural India's limited LPG usage and underlines the challenge of getting households to consistently use clean cooking fuel.

### **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**

- **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** has launched this scheme to provide 5 Crore deposit-free LPG (clean cooking fuel) connections to women belonging to the **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** households, which were subsequently increased to 8 Crore with a budgetary allocation of Rs. 12800 crore.
- This scheme **provides LPG connections to all poor on account of their names** not been covered in earlier identified categories like **identified through Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) list** and in case the names are not appearing in the SECC list, **beneficiaries are identified from categories i.e. SC/STs households, beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY Gramin), Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Forest dwellers, Most backward Classes (MBC), Tea & Ex-Tea Garden Tribes and people residing in Islands/ river islands.**

### **Implementation of PMUY**

- Its implementation has resulted in **significant increase in national LPG coverage**, in general and Eastern States, in particular.
- The scheme has resulted in **mass coverage of rural poor households** and 48% of the beneficiaries are SC/STs.

- Those beneficiaries, who could not afford to make upfront payment under this scheme for purchase of gas stove and refilling of cylinder, were provided **loan facility by the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs)**.
- It is significant to mention that under the PMUY, the **average per capita consumption is 3.28**. This should be seen as a **positive change** in the lives of these households which were long dependent on the traditional cooking fuels and methods.
- **LPG Panchayats** were formed to promote learning through peer group interaction - **Kuch Seekhein, Kuch Sikhayein**, where apart from experience sharing, it also aims at safe and sustained usage of LPG.
- PMUY implementation has been appreciated by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and termed it as a decisive intervention to check the indoor health pollution being faced by the women of the country.

## 7 Women Livelihood Bonds

**Context:** The World Bank, the Small Industries Development Bank (Sidbi) and the UN Women, along with 10 wealth management firms and leading corporates announced the launch of a new social impact bond to offer credit to rural women entrepreneurs.

### About:

- To be raised by **SIDBI**, the **Women's Livelihood Bonds** will offer an annual coupon of 3 per cent and will have tenure of five years.
- The fund to be raised through this bond will be **around Rs 300 crore** in multiple tranches over the **next three months** and will be **transferred through SIDBI into the micro- finance industry for small and medium women entrepreneurs**.
- The funds will be used for **lending to individual women entrepreneurs** in sectors such as **agriculture, food processing, services and manufacturing**.
- The new bonds will help **individual women entrepreneurs in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, services and food processing** to borrow around Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.50 lakh at an annual interest rate capped at around 13% or less, almost half the rate charged currently by microfinance institutes .
- The microfinance institutes have been trying to catering to this segment of people by forming self-help groups (SHGs), however, the credit limit is usually capped at Rs 50,000 or Rs 1 lakh.

## 8 Atal Innovation Mission

- It is a flagship initiative set up by the **NITI Aayog** to promote **innovation and entrepreneurship** across the country.
- It is envisaged as an **umbrella innovation organization** that would play an instrumental role in alignment of innovation policies between **central, state and sectoral innovation schemes**.
- Long term goals of AIM **include establishment and promotion of Small Business Innovation Research and Development at a national scale**.

### Atal Tinkering Labs- to promote creative, and innovative mind set in schools

- AIM is setting up state of the art ATL in schools across **all districts in India**.
- These ATLs are **dedicated innovation workspaces** of 1200-1500 square feet where do-it-yourself

(DIY) kits on latest technologies like 3D Printers, Robotics, Internet of Things (IOT), Miniaturized electronics are installed using a grant of Rs 20 Lakhs from the government so that students from Grade VI to Grade XII can tinker with these technologies and learn to create innovative solutions using these technologies.

- The vision is to have every school have access to **at least one or more Atal Tinkering Labs** in each district of the country, as well as to scale the same up with the help of state education ministries across the length and breadth of the country.
- Also Government / Govt Aided schools, and Girls schools, North East and Hilly District schools get a special preference in the consideration of ATL selections.

### **Atal Incubators Centres (AIC) – promoting entrepreneurship in universities and industry**

- At the university, NGO, SME and Corporate industry levels, AIM is setting up world-class Atal Incubators that would trigger and enable successful growth of sustainable startups in every sector /state of the country
- It is aimed at providing a grant of upto Rs 10 Crores to successful applicants for setting up greenfield incubators or scaling up existing ones.
- **Women led incubators and entrepreneurial startups are strongly encouraged by AIM.**

## **9 Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC) Program**

**Context:** Recently, the Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC) program was launched by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to foster innovation in India.

### **About:**

- The programme is aimed at spurring **community innovation in underserved and un-served areas** of the country. The significance of innovation can be understood by the fact that through innovation India can become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2024-25.
- ACIC can serve as the **bridge between the knowledge base existing in communities and the advanced technical ecosystem prevalent in the market base, addressing the needs of society.**

### **Importance of ACIC:**

- India is set to become the largest consumer of fossil fuel in the next 15 years. Hence, there is a dire need to reduce India's crude oil import bill which is pegged at Rs 6 lakh crore per annum. This program can come up with innovative methods like waste to wealth, which will help India in reducing its fossil fuel import bill.
- The program can be connected to **every Panchayati Raj Institutions** to help innovators at grassroots level become part of the policy framework and leverage their creativity to translate their products and services into innovation led commercial utilization for society.
- The program can play a major role towards establishing India **as Innovation and Technology led Start-up nation and improve the ranking of India in Global Innovation Index.**

## **10 Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana(ABVKY)**

- **Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana** is a welfare measure being implemented by the **Employee's State Insurance (ESI) Corporation.**

- It offers **cash compensation** to insured persons when they are rendered unemployed.
- The scheme is implemented on pilot basis for a period of **two years initially**.

### Benefits under the scheme

- The scheme provides relief to the extent of **25% of the average per day** earning during the previous four contribution periods to be paid up to **maximum 90 days** of unemployment once in lifetime of the Insured Person.
- The maximum duration, for which an IP shall be eligible to draw the Relief under the Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY) will be **90 days once in life time after a minimum of two years of Insurable Employment**.
- The claim for relief under the Atal Beemit Kalyaan Yojana will be payable after the **three months of his/her clear unemployment**.
- The relief will be paid for **clear month of unemployment**.
- **No prospective claim will be allowed.**
- In case the beneficiary gets gainful employment in between the **three months of unemployment** for which he was eligible for relief under ABVKY, the relief will be payable for clear month of unemployment between the date of unemployment and date of re-employment.

### Eligibility

- Employees covered **under Section 2(9) of the ESI Act 1948**.
- The Insured Person (IP) should have been rendered unemployed during the period the relief is claimed.
- The Insured Person should have been in **insurable employment for a minimum period of two years**.
- The Insured Person should have contributed **not less than 78 days** during each of the preceding four contribution periods.
- The contribution in respect of him should have been paid or payable by the employer.
- The contingency of the unemployment should not have been as a result of any punishment for misconduct or superannuation or voluntary retirement.
- **Aadhar and Bank Account** of the Insured Person should be linked with insured person database.

## 11 National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons

**Context:** The Prime Minister of India launched the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons.

### Key features of scheme:

- Under this scheme all shopkeepers, retail traders and self-employed persons are assured a minimum monthly pension of **Rs. 3,000/- month after attaining the age of 60 years**.
- All small shopkeepers and self-employed persons as well as the retail traders with GST turnover **below Rs. 1.5 crore and age between 18-40 years**, can enrol for this scheme. The scheme would **benefit more than 3 crore small shopkeepers and traders**.
- The scheme is based on **self-declaration** as **no documents are required except Aadhaar and bank account**. Interested persons can enrol themselves through more than 3,25,000 Common Service Centres spread across the country.
- **GSTIN is required only for those with turnover above Rs. 40 lakhs.**



- The **Central Government shall give 50 % share of the monthly contribution and remaining 50% contribution shall be made by the beneficiary.** For example if a person with age of 29 years contributes Rs. 100/- month, then the Central Government also contributes the equal amount as subsidy into subscriber's pension account every month.
- The **beneficiary should not be income tax payer and also not a member of EPFO/ESIC/NPS (Govt.) /PM-SYM.**
- This scheme will target enrolling 25 lakh subscribers in 2019-20 and 2 crore subscribers by 2023-2024. An estimated 3 crore Vyaparis in the country are expected to be benefitted under the pension scheme.

## 12 Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)

- The Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana was first launched on a pilot basis in 2009-10 for an **area-based development** approach of **predominantly Dalit villages.**
- It aimed to **achieve integrated development of selected villages** with more than 50% SC population through convergent implementation of all relevant Central and State schemes.

### Problems in implementation of PMAGY

- Over the last decade, **merely 2,500 Dalit-majority villages** were taken up under the scheme.
- Due to the pace, people gradually lost interest and the implementation fizzled out eventually.
- Due to the break in continuity, there was no regular Budget allocation for the scheme on an annual basis.

## 13 Targeted PMKVY and Skills Framework

**Context:** The government plans to revamp its skills framework, including a more targeted Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

### About:

- The **Skill development and entrepreneurship ministry** has released its **2025 Vision statement** to help enhance the scale of skilling in the country, in line with vision of making India the skills capital of the world.
- It plans to revamp its skills framework, including a more targeted **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**
- It aims to set a dedicated '**National Institute of Skill Development**' to centralise skill training and funding. The structure and functions of the institute are yet to be decided.
- A dedicated institute for skill development could serve as a **common umbrella**, collectively evolving into a **think tank for knowledge production and capacity building for skill and entrepreneurship development in the country.**
- **NSDC (National Skills Development Corporation)** will cease to play the role of an **implementor PMKVY and focus on its other three roles- creating sustainable ecosystem for skill development, incentivising skill development programmes, and providing services such as innovation and funding.**
- The ministry is looking to enhance the role of '**sector skills councils**' to assess demand generation in the informal sector.
- Participation from states and MSMEs, we will now be **increased to account for local context and skilled needs of the informal sector.**

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# AGRICULTURE, FARMER WELFARE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## 1 PM – KISAN scheme

**Context:** Good monsoon may have laid the foundation for record foodgrain production, but it was the launch of schemes like PM-Kisan that has set the ball rolling for structural reforms in the agriculture sector to achieve the target of doubling farmers' income.

### About the scheme:

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a **Central Sector scheme** with 100% funding from Government of India.
- Under the Scheme an income support of **Rs.6000/- per year** is provided to all farmer families across the country in three equal installments of **Rs.2000/- each every four months**.
- The entire responsibility of identification of beneficiary farmer families rests with the State / UT Governments.
- The fund is **directly transferred to the bank accounts** of the beneficiaries.
- Farmers covered under the **Exclusion Criteria of the Operational Guidelines are not eligible** for the benefit of the Scheme.
- For enrollment, the farmer is required to approach the local patwari / revenue officer / Nodal Officer (PM-Kisan) nominated by the State Government.
- The **Common Service Centres (CSCs) have also been authorized** to do registration of the farmers for the Scheme upon payment of fees.
- Farmers can also do their self-registration through the **Farmers Corner in the portal**.
- Farmers can also edit their names in PM-Kisan database as per their Aadhaar database / card through the Farmers Corner in the portal.
- Farmers can also know the status of their payment through the Farmers Corner in the portal.

### Major Objective of the scheme

- With a view to provide income support to **all land holding eligible farmer families**, the Government has launched PM-KISAN.
- The scheme aims 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.

## Definition of farmer's family

- A landholder farmer's family is defined as "a family comprising of husband, wife and minor children who own cultivable land as per land records of the concerned State/UT".
- The existing land-ownership system will be used for identification of beneficiaries for calculation of benefit.

## 2 Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF)

**Context:** The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs recently approved creation of a corpus of Rs. 2000 crore for Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF).

### About:

- The fund would be created with **NABARD** for development and up-gradation of agricultural marketing infrastructure in **Gramin Agricultural Markets and Regulated Wholesale Markets**.
- It will provide the State/UT Governments subsidized loan for developing marketing infrastructure in 585 Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) and 10,000 **Grameen Agricultural Markets (GrAMs)**.
- States may also access **AMIF for innovative integrated market infrastructure projects** including Hub and Spoke mode and in Public Private Partnership mode.
- In these **GrAMs**, physical and basic infrastructure will be strengthened using MGNREGA and other Government Schemes.
- After approval of AMIF Scheme, the **interest subsidy will be provided by DAC&FW** to NABARD in alignment with annual budget releases during 2018-19 and 2019-20 as well as upto 2024-25.
- The Scheme being demand driven, its progress is **subject to the demands from the States** and proposals received from them.

### What is APMC?

- Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) is a **statutory market committee constituted by State Governments** for trade in certain notified agricultural or horticultural or livestock products, under the **Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act of the respective state**.

## 3 'Soil Health Card'

**Context:** Evaluation of Soil Health Card Scheme has revealed significant reduction in usage of area in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra.

### Soil Health Card Scheme

- **Soil Health Card Scheme** was launched in 2015 to issue 'Soil card' to farmers which will carry **crop-wise recommendations of nutrients and fertilizers** required for the individual farms.
- This is aimed to help farmers to **improve productivity through judicious use of inputs**.
- It is promoted by the **Department of Agriculture & Co-operation under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**.
- It is being implemented through the **Department of Agriculture of all the State and Union Territory Governments**

- It is made available **once in a cycle of 3 years**, which indicates the status of soil health of a farmer's holding for that particular period.

#### The unique features of SHC scheme are:

- **Collecting soil samples** at a grid of 2.5 ha in irrigated area and 10 ha in un-irrigated areas.
- **GPS enabled soil sampling** to create a systematic database and allow monitoring of changes in the soil health over the years.
- **Uniform approach in soil testing** adopted for 12 parameters viz. **primary nutrients (NPK); secondary nutrient (S); micronutrients (B,Zn, Mn, Fe & Cu); and other (pH, EC & OC)** for comprehensiveness.
- It also provides **crop wise fertiliser recommendations**.
- It would also lead to **crop diversification** in the country.

## 4 Kisan Credit Card

**Context:** Kisan Credit Cards Scheme has been extended to fisheries and animal husbandry by Ministry of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

#### More on News:

- The extension of KCC will include **both inland and marine fisheries**.
- Banks have been instructed to extend credit facilities to individual fishermen, fishermen groups, self-help groups and women self-help groups engaged in inland and marine fisheries.
- The **District-Level Technical Committee** would fix the scale of finance and the banks would fix the repayment period.

#### KCC Scheme

- KCC scheme was prepared by **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** on the recommendation of **R.V. Gupta committee in 1998-99** to fulfil the financial requirements of the farmers at various stages of farming through institutional credit.
- **Small and Marginal farmers, share croppers, lessee and tenant farmers and self-help groups (SHGs) or Joint Liability Groups (JLGs)** are eligible to get the benefits of the KCC Scheme.
- In case of credit limit above Rs. 1 lakh, beneficiary has to **pledge the crops or pledge his land as mortgage**.
- However, collateral security may be obtained at the discretion of bank in some cases.
- **KCC is valid for 5 years** subject to annual review and performance of the borrower.

#### Who implemented this scheme?

- The KCC scheme is being implemented **by the all Co-operative banks, Regional Rural Banks and public sector banks throughout the country**.
- **NABARD monitors the scheme** in terms of the Cooperative Banks & RRBs and RBI in respect of Commercial Banks.
- A new feature is started in the KCC scheme by the RBI and NABARD which **provides ATM card to farmers** which can be used at all ATMs and point of sale terminals.

#### RuPay Kisan Credit Card

- RuPay is an **Indian domestic card scheme** conceived and launched by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.

- It was created to fulfill the Reserve Bank of India's desire to have a domestic, open loop, and multilateral system of payments in India.
- RuPay facilitates electronic payment at all Indian banks and financial institutions, and competes with MasterCard and Visa in India.
- **NABARD**, in January, 2013 set up **Special Project Unit- Kisan Credit Card (SPU-KCC)** with a mandate for encouraging cooperative banks and Regional Rural Banks across the country to issue RuPay KCC debit cards.
- The overarching goal is to **develop cash-less eco system** by enabling the farming community to avail all new banking facilities at par with urban area of the country.

## 5 Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY)

**Context:** Prime Minister launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

### Key features of the Scheme:

- The PM-KMY is a **Central Sector Scheme**, administered by the **Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare**, Government of India in partnership with the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)**.
- **The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) shall be the Pension Fund Manager** and responsible for Pension pay out.
- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY) provides for an **assured monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- to all land holding Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs)**, whether male or female, on their attaining the **age of 60 years**.
- The amount of the **monthly contribution ranges between Rs.55 to Rs.200 per month** depending upon the age of entry of the farmers into the Scheme.
- The **Central Government will also make an equal contribution** of the same amount in the pension fund.
- The **spouse is also eligible to get a separate pension** of Rs.3000/- upon making separate contributions to the Fund.
- In case of death of the farmer before retirement date, the **spouse may continue in the scheme** by paying the remaining contributions till the remaining age of the deceased farmer.
- If the farmer dies after the retirement date, the **spouse will receive 50% of the pension** as Family Pension.
- After the **death of both the farmer and the spouse**, the accumulated corpus **shall be credited back to the Pension Fund**.

### Eligibility:

- All Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) in all States and Union Territories of the country, **who are of the age of 18 years and above and upto the age of 40 years**, and who do not fall within the purview of the exclusion criteria as mentioned in the guidelines, are eligible to avail the benefits of this Scheme by joining it.
- Farmers falling within the purview of the exclusion criteria are not eligible for the benefit.

### Exclusion Criteria:

- **SMFs covered under any other statutory social security schemes** such as National Pension Scheme (NPS), Employees' State Insurance Corporation scheme, Employees' Fund Organization Scheme etc.

- Farmers who have opted for **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi MaanDhan Yojana** (PMSYM) administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- Farmers who have opted for **Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana** (PM-LVM) administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

### **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojna**

- (PMKSY) is approved by GOI and it is a **centrally sponsored scheme** under **Ministry of Food Processing Industries**.
- It is a scheme for **Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters**.
- It is a big step towards **doubling of farmer's income** through the assets (Sampada) of farmer.
- It is a comprehensive package which will result in creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.
- It will provide a big **boost to the growth of food processing sector** in the country and creates huge employment opportunities in the rural areas, **reducing wastage of agricultural produce** and increasing the food processing level and its export.

### **The following schemes will be implemented under PMKSY:**

- Mega Food Parks
- Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure
- Creation/ Expansion of Food Processing/ Preservation Capacities (Unit Scheme)
- Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters
- Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages
- Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure
- Human Resources and Institutions
- Operation Greens

## **6 Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM) Scheme**

**Context:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved launch of Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan with the objective of providing financial and water security to farmers.

- **The proposed scheme consists of three components:**
- **10,000 MW of Decentralized Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants.**
- Under Component A, **Renewable power plants of capacity 500 KW to 2 MW** will be setup by individual farmers/ cooperatives/panchayats /farmer producer organisations (FPO) on their barren or cultivable lands.
- The power generated will be **purchased by the DISCOMs at Feed in tariffs** determined by respective SERC.
- The scheme will open a stable and continuous source of income to the rural land owners.
- **Performance Based Incentives** @ Rs. 0.40 per unit for five years to be provided to DISCOMs.
- **Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.**
- Under Component B, individual **farmers will be supported to install standalone solar pumps** of capacity up to 7.5 HP.
- Solar PV capacity in kW equal to the pump capacity in HP is allowed under the scheme.

## Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps

- Under Component C of the scheme, **individual farmers will be supported to solarise pumps of capacity up to 7.5 HP.**
- Solar PV capacity up to two times of pump capacity in kW is allowed under the scheme.
- The farmer will be able to use the generated energy to meet the irrigation needs and the excess available energy will be **sold to DISCOM.**
- This will help to create an avenue for extra income to the farmers, and for the States to meet their RPO targets.

### Aim

- All three components combined, the scheme aims to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022.

## 7 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora'

**Context:** The Haryana government announced the launch of 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' portal whereby farmers can avail benefits of several government schemes directly after uploading their crop-related details.

### About:

#### 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' Portal

- It is a **multi-level transparent system** and this initiative is a step forward towards doubling of farmer's income by 2022.
- This simple system will enable farmers to self-report their land and crop details and help them receive benefits of several government schemes directly.
- The portal, **fasalhry.in**, has brought the **departments of agriculture and farmer's welfare, revenue, food civil supplies and consumer affairs and science and technology** on a single platform for the betterment of the farmers.
- The portal has been designed to ensure that the farmers get the benefits offered by the State Government including **insurance cover, compensation on account of crop damage due to natural calamities and other financial assistance** under different schemes.
- Through the portal, the government will also get the **accurate data of area and name of crop cultivated** in various parts of the state.
- The farmers will be required to upload information like the name of crop sown, area under cultivation, cropping month, bank account number and mobile number on the portal at the nearby **Common Service Centres (CSCs)** or **AtalSevaKendras** with the help of **Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs)** by July 31.
- The farmer would also be required to fill the details About: the non-cultivated land in case he has not sown any crop yet.
- E-girdawari** (harvest inspection) would be conducted under this system and while conducting girdawari, the concerned officer or official would have to remain physically present at the field.
- Thereafter, the registration would be done by the departments.
- When the crop is ready for harvesting, satellite photography of the field would be conducted by the **Science and Technology Department**. These images would also be enclosed with their registration. In case any discrepancy is found in the girdawari, a special girdawari would be got conducted by the Deputy Commissioner concerned

- Financial incentive of **Rs 10 per acre or part thereof**, subject to **minimum of Rs 20 and maximum of Rs 50**, would be provided to each farmer for registering on the portal.

## 8 Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)

### Context:

- In the recent Union Budget of 2019, ZBNF model has been emphasised, which can help in doubling farmers' income.
- Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have been shifted towards this model.
- What is ZBNF?**
  - It is a method of **chemical-free agriculture** drawing from traditional Indian practices.
  - Using **cow dung, urine based formulations and botanical extracts** would help farmers in reducing the input cost.
  - Intercropping with leguminous crops** is one of the components of ZBNF and it improves the crop productivity and soil fertility by way of fixing the atmospheric nitrogen.
  - It promotes **soil aeration, minimal watering, intercropping, bunds and topsoil mulching** and discourages intensive irrigation and deep ploughing.

### Background

- It was **developed by SubhashPalekar** from Maharashtra in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the Green Revolution's methods, which led to indebtedness and suicide among farmers due to rising cost on external inputs in agriculture.

### Components of ZBNF

- Jeevamrutha**: It is a fermented **microbial culture** that uses urine and dung from an indigenous cow breed and paste of green gram to rejuvenate the soil to **provide micro-nutrients to crops**.
- Bijamrita**: It is a treatment used for seeds, seedlings or any planting material.
- Acchadana**: It promotes mulching and soil aeration for favourable soil conditions.
- Whapasa**: It provides moisture to the soil.

## 9 Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana

**Context:** Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development is implementing MahilaKisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) to empower women in agriculture by making systematic investments to enhance their participation and productivity, as also to create and sustain their agriculture-based livelihoods.

### About:

- Rural women form the most productive work force in the economy** of majority of the developing nations including India.
- More than **80% of rural women are engaged in agriculture activities** for their livelihoods.
- About: 20 per cent of farm livelihoods are female headed due to widowhood, desertion, or male emigration.



- Agriculture support system in India strengthens the exclusion of women from their entitlements as agriculture workers and cultivators.
- The “Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana” (MKSP), a **sub component of the Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-NRLM (DAY-NRLM)** seeks to improve the present status of women in Agriculture, and to enhance the opportunities available to empower her.
- MKSP recognizes the identity of “**Mahila**” as “**Kisan**” and strives to build the capacity of women in the domain of agro-ecologically sustainable practices.
- It has a clear vision to reach out to the poorest of poor households and **expand the portfolio of activities currently handled by the MahilaKisan.**
- The focus of MKSP is on capacitating smallholders to adopt sustainable climate resilient agro-ecology and eventually create a pool of skilled community professionals.

### Objective of the mission

- Its objective is to strengthen smallholder agriculture through **promotion of sustainable agriculture practices** such as Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA), Non Pesticide Management (NPM), Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), Pashu-Sakhi model for doorstep animal care services, Sustainable regeneration and harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Produce.

## 10 Odisha's KALIA scheme

**Context:** The Odisha Cabinet approved the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme amounting to Rs10,000 crore to accelerate agricultural prosperity and to reduce poverty in the State.

### About:

- **All the small and marginal farmers of the State** will be covered under the scheme.
- An amount of Rs.10,000 per family at the rate of **Rs.5,000 for Kharif and Rabi shall be provided** as financial assistance for taking up cultivation.
- 10 lakh landless households will be supported with a **unit cost of Rs.12,500 to take up activities** like small goat rearing units, mini layer units, duck units, fishery kits for fishermen and women, mushroom cultivation and bee keeping.
- An **annual financial assistance of Rs. 10,000 per household** will be provided to take care of sustenance of farmers not able to take up cultivation due to old age, disability, disease or other reasons
- Deserving families will be **identified and selected by gram panchayats**. About: 10 lakh households will be covered over two years.
- The KALIA scheme also include **life insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh** and additional **personal accident cover of Rs 2 lakh** will be provided to both cultivators and landless agriculture labourers
- The **crop loan up to Rs 50,000** will henceforth be **interest free**.

## 11 Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Yojana

**Context:** Cabinet approves continuation of Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Yojana from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

**About:**

- **Approvals include:**

- ▶ Continuing the existing schemes of **MPDA, Khadi Grant, ISEC and Village Industry Grant**, all **subsumed under 'Khadi and Gramodyog Vikas Yojana'** for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20.
- ▶ Bringing in a new component of '**Rozgar Yukt Gaon**' to introduce enterprise-based operation in the Khadi sector and to create employment opportunities for thousands of new artisans for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

- **Rozgar Yukta Gaon:** It is aimed at introducing an '**Enterprise-led Business Model**' in place of '**Subsidy-led model**' through partnership among 3 stakeholders-KRDP-assisted Khadi Institution, Artisans and Business Partner.
- It will be **rolled out in 50 Villages** by providing 10,000 Charkhas, 2000 looms & 100 warping units to Khadi artisans, and would create direct employment for 250 Artisans per village.

- ▶ Under the **Village Industry verticals**, special focus shall be on Agro-based and food processing (Honey, Palmgur etc.), Handmade Paper and Leather, Pottery and Wellness and Cosmetics sectors through Product Innovation, Design Development & Product Diversification.
- ▶ For this initiative, **advanced skill development programmes shall be conducted** through existing Centres of Excellence such as CGCRI, CFTRI, IIFPT, CBRTI, KNHPI, IPRITI etc.
- ▶ Another intervention is to set up **4 Design Houses across the country** to capture regional variations, to provide access to Khadi Institutions, to evolve modern designs, ethnic wear etc. with an investment of Rs.5 crore each.

## 12 Kaleshwaram Project

**Context:** Recently, Telangana government inaugurated world's largest multi-stage lift irrigation scheme namely Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project Phase I.

**About:**

- The Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP) is a multi-purpose irrigation project on the **Godavari River** in Kaleshwaram, Telangana.

**Background**

- This project is an off-shoot of the original **Pranahitha-Chevella Lift Irrigation Scheme** taken up by the Congress government in 2007 when Andhra Pradesh was not divided.
- After the formation of **Telangana in 2014**, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government redesigned the project on the ground that the original plan had too many environmental obstacles and had very low water storage provision.
- With the help of highly advanced **Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR)** survey and study of flows in Godavari at different locations, the government separated the original project into two projects- **Pranahitha project** and **Kaleshwaram project**.

## 13 Jal Jeevan Mission

**Context:** The NDA government has formed a new ministry to address all water issues that looks at the management of water resources and drinking water supply.

**About:**

- Prime Minister flagged the growing water crisis in the country and unveiled the ambitious **Jal Jeevan Mission aimed at providing potable water**.
- Providing **safe drinking water** to all parts of the country remains a priority.
- Under the JalJeevan Mission, the government will **focus on rainwater harvesting and water conservation** in **256 districts in the first phase** and carry out other initiatives, including renovation of traditional water bodies and tanks, reuse of water and recharge structures, watershed development and intensive afforestation.
- The NDA government has formed a new ministry to address all water issues that looks at the management of water resources and drinking water supply in a holistic manner.
- The **Jal Shakti Ministry**, formed by **integrating the Water Resources and Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministries**, aims to work with state governments to ensure **Har Ghar Jal to all rural households by 2024**.
- This assumes importance given that water crisis has presented itself as a clear and present danger to India.
- Policy think-tank **NITI Aayog said in a report** that nearly 600 million Indians already face “high to extreme water stress.
- Cities, including Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad, will run out of groundwater by 2020, affecting 100 million people.
- Matters are only likely to worsen with the country’s water demand likely to double by 2030, indicating there will be a **6% loss in gross domestic product by 2050**.
- India’s most water-stressed blocks are in **Tamil Nadu (541), followed by Rajasthan (218), Uttar Pradesh (139) and Telangana (137)**, with several states reeling from drought-like conditions.
- To encourage local participation, **National Cadet Corps, National Service Scheme and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan will be involved** along with non-government organisations (NGOs) and students from local engineering colleges.

**14 Atal Bhujal Yojana - A scheme for groundwater**

**Context:** Atal Bhujal Yojana has been launched amid growing concerns over the country’s groundwater resources.

**Background**

- Prime Minister launched the Atal Bhujal Yojana, or AtalJal.
- AtalJal is a **World Bank-funded, central scheme** aimed at improving groundwater management.
- The idea first came up in 2015, in view of depleting groundwater resources. The government announced its intention to start a programme for management of groundwater resources in the Budget of 2016-17.

**Features of the scheme**

- **ATAL JAL** has been designed with the principal objective of strengthening the institutional framework for participatory groundwater management and **bringing About: behavioral changes** at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management **in seven States**, viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

- Implementation of the scheme is expected to benefit nearly **8350 Gram Panchayats in 78 districts** in these States.
- ATAL JAL will promote **panchayat led ground water management and behavioural change** with primary focuses on demand side management.
- Out of the total outlay, to be implemented over a period of 5 years, **50% shall be in the form of World Bank loan**, and be repaid by the Central Government.
- The remaining **50% shall be through Central Assistance** from regular budgetary support.
- The entire World Bank's loan component and Central Assistance shall be passed on to the States as Grants.

**15**

## **Comprehensive Water Management Index (CWMI) 2019, Second-edition**

### **About:**

- The Comprehensive Water Management Index (CWMI) **by NITI Aayog**, which measures the performance of states on a set of water indicators, comes at a time when various states across the country are facing a shortage in groundwater.
- Even as states are making progress in water management, the **overall performance remains well below what is required** to adequately tackle India's water challenges.
- The states must improve water management practices so that the country can provide its citizens with better quality of life, support economic growth and sustain its ecosystem.
- The low-performing states, which include **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Delhi, Rajasthan, Nagaland and Meghalaya**, collectively account for around 48 per cent of the population, 40 per cent of agricultural produce and 35 per cent of economic output of India.
- The **CWMI measures performance of states on a set of water indicators and nine themes** — source augmentation and restoration of water bodies, source augmentation (groundwater), major and medium irrigation, watershed management, participatory irrigation practices, sustainable on-farm water use practices, rural drinking water, urban water supply and sanitation, and policy and governance.
- Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh continue to demonstrate strong water management practices.
- On the other hand, out of the 14 low performing states from the year 2015-16, **only Haryana, Goa, and Telangana have been able to cross the 50-point threshold.**
- **Delhi was assessed on the Index for the first time this year.**
- None of the top 10 agricultural producers in India, **except Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh**, scored more than 60 points on the CWMI.
- The government will **work on looking for solutions to desalinate water**, make treated water available for industries and work on recharging groundwater.

**16**

## **Jal Shakti Abhiyan**

**Context:** Due to increasing water scarcity in urban centres like Chennai, and drought in many parts of central India, the Centre government has initiated the Jal Shakti Abhiyan as a Jan-Andolan or people's movement on water conservation.

**More on News:**

- According to Jal Shakti ministry, **there is no additional funding or specific targets for Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) to achieve.**
- There was plenty of money already allocated for existing schemes under the Central and State budgets. They **can be converted into a single scheme, with a focussed approach.**
- A **large-scale communications campaign has also been planned alongside the JSA** involving mass mobilisation of different groups including school students, college students, swachhagrahis, Self Help Groups, Panchayati Raj Institution members, youth groups (NSS/NYKS/NCC), defence personnel, ex-servicemen and pensioners, among various others.
- The conservation efforts will be supplemented by initiatives like developing block and district water conservation plans and '**krishivigyankendramelas**' to promote efficient water use for irrigation and better crop choices.

**Jal Shakti Abhiyan**

- The campaign would run from July 1 to September 15 in **States receiving rainfall during the south-west monsoon**, while States receiving rainfall in the retreating or north-east monsoon would be covered from October 1 to November 30.
- It is a collaborative effort of various ministries of the Government of India and state governments, being **coordinated by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) that comes under the Jal Shakti Ministry.**
- An important part of this Abhiyan is that it will **focus on five aspects** - water conservation and rainwater harvesting, renovation of traditional and other water bodies, reuse of water and recharging of structures, watershed development, and intensive afforestation.

**17 Watershed Management Programmes in India****Prime Minister Krishi Sinchayee Yojna**

- **Watershed Development Component-WDC-PMKSY** - The main objectives of the WDC-PMKSY are to **restore the ecological balance** by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, vegetative cover.

**Neeranchal Watershed Program**

- Neeranchal is a **World Bank assisted National Watershed Management Project.** Neeranchal is designed to **further strengthen and provide technical assistance** to the Watershed Component of PMKSY, in particular and all components of PMKSY, in general, to enhance its delivery capacity.

**State specific lead in water management programmes**

- **Mission Kakatiya** - launched by **Telangana government** aims to develop minor irrigation infrastructure, and strengthen community based irrigation management
- **Jalyukt-shivir** - is a project of **Maharashtra government** which aims to make 5000 villages free of water scarcity every year.
- **Mukhya Mantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan** - has been **launched by Rajasthan** for effective implementation of water conservation and water harvesting in rural areas.

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# INDUSTRY, TRADE & COMMERCE SCHEMES & INITIATIVES.

## 1 SPICe+ web form

**Context:** As part of the Government of India's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) initiatives, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has notified a new web form christened Simplified Proforma for Incorporating Company Electronically Plus (SPICe+) replacing the existing SPICe form.

- SPICe+ will offer **10 services by 3 Central Govt Ministries & Departments** (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Labour, and Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance) and **one State Government (Maharashtra)**.
- **Registration for EPFO and ESIC shall be mandatory** for all new companies to be incorporated through SPICe+ and no EPFO & ESIC registration nos. shall be separately issued by the respective agencies.
- **Registration for Profession Tax shall also be mandatory** for all new companies to be incorporated in the State of Maharashtra through SPICe+.
- This will save procedure, time, and cost for starting a business in India and will be applicable for all new company incorporations.
- India had improved its ranking to the **63<sup>rd</sup> spot on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) survey**, out of 190 countries.
- The reserve unique name (RUN) web service will now **only be applicable for a change of name** with SPICe+ coming in.
- In the 2019 EODB rankings, the **World Bank had placed India at the 136<sup>th</sup> spot** for ease of starting business. The country was ranked **154<sup>th</sup> and 115<sup>th</sup> for paying taxes and enforcing contracts** in the survey.

## 2 National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018

**Context:**

- **The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) hosted third edition of the National Entrepreneurship Awards (NEA) on January 4, 2019 at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.**
- **A total of 43 awards were presented, including 39 awards for Young Entrepreneurs in different sectors and 4 awards for Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders.**

**About:**

- The **NEA is a platform focused on driving innovation**, ushering in a positive change for youth in entrepreneurship across all the industries, thus differentiating it from other awards programs.
- **The awards will acknowledge an Entrepreneur and Entity/ Individual Supporting Entrepreneurs** exceptional growth, strategies and products, dedicated customer focus, etc. to inspire and promote growth of entrepreneurs in India.

**Categories**

- The awards are classified **into three investment categories**- below Rs. 1 Lakh, between Rs. 1 Lakh to Rs. 10 Lakhs and between Rs. 10 Lakhs to Rs. 1 Crore- covering small to big first-generation entrepreneurs.
- This is to ensure that **entrepreneurs from every socio-economic category take part in the award** and they are duly recognised for their meaningful contribution to the economy of the nation.
- The winners received a trophy, certificate and **cash prizes ranging from Rs. 5 to 10 lakhs**.

**Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE):**

- **MSDE was formed in November, 2014 by the Government of India** to focus on enhancing employability by bridging the gap between demand and supply of skilled workforce through skill development and expansion of youth entrepreneurship education and capacity.
- To stay relevant in ever-changing skill market, **it aims to build the new skills and innovative thinking** not only for existing jobs but also for jobs that are to be created.

**3 Sabka Vishwas Scheme****Context:**

- **SabkaVishwas Scheme was announced in the Union Budget 2019.**
- **It has now been notified and will be operationalized from 1st September 2019.**

**Sabka Vishwas Scheme**

- It is a **Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme**.
- The scheme targets those taxpayers who want to close their pending disputes related to **Service Tax and Excise Tax** (now subsumed under Goods and Services Tax). Hence, the term '**legacy**'.
- **This scheme offers amnesty** (official pardon) to those who wish to disclose any previously undisclosed tax liability without any penalty or prosecution.
- The **two main components of the Scheme** are dispute resolution and amnesty.
  - ▶ The **dispute resolution component** is aimed at liquidating the legacy cases of Central Excise and Service Tax that are subsumed in GST and are pending in litigation at various forums.
  - ▶ The **amnesty component** of the Scheme offers an opportunity to the taxpayers to pay the outstanding tax and be free of any other consequence under the law.
  - ▶ The most attractive aspect of the Scheme is that **it provides substantial relief in the tax dues for all categories of cases as well as full waiver of interest, fine, penalty**. In all these cases, there would be **no other liability of interest, fine or penalty**. There is also a complete amnesty from prosecution.
- The Scheme is especially tailored to free the large number of **small taxpayers** of their pending disputes with the tax administration.

## Taxes subsumed into GST

### ◦ At the Central level, the following taxes are being subsumed:

- ▶ Central Excise Duty,
- ▶ Additional Excise Duty,
- ▶ Service Tax,
- ▶ Additional Customs Duty commonly known as Countervailing Duty, and
- ▶ Special Additional Duty of Customs.

### At the State level, the following taxes are being subsumed:

- ▶ Subsuming of State Value Added Tax/Sales Tax,
- ▶ Entertainment Tax (other than the tax levied by the local bodies), Central Sales Tax (levied by the Centre and collected by the States),
- ▶ Octroi and Entry tax,
- ▶ Purchase Tax,
- ▶ Luxury tax, and
- ▶ Taxes on lottery, betting and gambling.

## 4 New FDI guidelines for the e-commerce

### Context:

- Central government has brought out the new FDI guidelines for the e-commerce that will come to effect from February 2019.
- The government is launching stricter guidelines that govern FDI in e-commerce firms.
- At present the DIPP provides guidelines on the functioning of an e-commerce marketplace.

### What are the changes to the FDI norms covering e-commerce?

- The revised FDI policy issued by the centre explains certain principles laid down in a 2017 circular on the operations of online market places, wherein **100% foreign direct investment, or full foreign ownership is allowed.**
- The new norms bar exclusive tie-ups between e-commerce firms that follow **the 'market place model' and vendors using their platform.**
- In a market place model, the **e-commerce firm is not allowed to directly or indirectly influence the sale price** of goods or services, and is required to offer a level playing field to all vendors.
- Now the cash back or services, such as quick delivery, offered by e-tailers have to be **applicable to all vendors on their platforms.**
- It also envisages that if a vendor sells more than 25% of its wares through an e-commerce marketplace, **the latter will be deemed to have an inventory model, in which FDI is not allowed.**
- Although, the **25% cap existed earlier**, but the onus of ensuring it, is now firmly on the e-commerce platform, so that it does not find itself on the wrong side of the law.
- It further said that **e-commerce firms will be barred from selling wares of related parties on the inventory**, of which it has a say.



## 5 The Industrial Relations Code, 2019

**Context:** Recently, Ministry of Labour and Employment introduced the Industrial Relations Code, 2019 in Lok Sabha.

### Salient features of the bill are:

- The Industrial Relations Code, 2019 **seeks to replace three labour laws:** (i) the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, (ii) the Trade Unions Act, 1926, and (iii) the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.
- **Trade unions:** Under the Code, **seven or more members of a trade union can apply to register it.** Trade unions that have a **membership of at least 10% of the workers or 100 workers**, whichever is less, will be registered. Further, **a registered trade union must always have at least seven workers** who are employed in the establishment or the connected industry, as its members. The **central or state government may recognise a trade union** or a federation of trade unions as Central or State Trade Unions respectively.
- **Negotiating unions:** The Code provides for a **negotiation union in an industrial establishment** for negotiating with the employer. If there is only one trade union in an industrial establishment, then the **employer is required to recognise such trade union as the sole negotiating union** of the workers. In case of multiple trade unions, the trade union with **support of at least 75% of workers** will be recognised as the negotiating union by the central or state government.
- **Unfair labour practices:** The Code **prohibits employers, workers, and trade unions from committing any unfair labour practices** listed in a Schedule to the Code. These include: (i) restricting workers from forming trade unions, (ii) establishing employer sponsored trade union of workers, and (iii) coercing workers to join trade unions.
- **Standing orders:** All industrial establishments with **at least 100 workers must prepare standing orders on matters listed in a Schedule to the Code.** The central government will prepare model standing orders on such matters, based on which industrial establishments are required to prepare their standing orders. **These matters relate to:** (i) classification of workers, (ii) manner of informing workers About: hours of work, holidays, paydays, and wage rates, (iii) termination of employment, (iv) suspension for misconduct, and (v) grievance redressal mechanisms for workers
- **Notice of change:** Employers who propose changes in the conditions of service are **required to give a notice to the workers.** The conditions of service for which a notice is required to be given are **listed in a Schedule to the Code and include wages, contribution, and leave.**
- **Lay-off and retrenchment:** The Code **defines lay-off as the inability of an employer**, due to shortage of coal, power, or breakdown of machinery, from giving employment to a worker. It also provides for employers to terminate the services of a worker, i.e., retrenchment. Employers of industrial establishments such as mines, factories and plantations **with at least 100 workers are required to take prior permission of the central or state government before lay-off**, retrenchment or closure. The central or state government can modify this threshold number of workers by notification. Any person who contravenes this provision is punishable with a fine between one lakh rupees and Rs. 10 lakh.
- **Industrial establishments, in which 50 to 100 workers are employed, are required to:** (i) pay 50% of basic wages and dearness allowance to a worker who has been laid off, and (ii) give one month's notice and wages for such period to a worker who has been retrenched. Any person who contravenes this provision is punishable with a fine between Rs. 50,000 and two lakh rupees. Further, if an employer proposes to re-employ retrenched workers, **such workers will have preference over other persons.**
- **Voluntary arbitration:** The Code allows for **industrial disputes to be voluntarily referred to arbitration by the employer and workers.** The parties to the dispute must sign a written

agreement referring the dispute to an arbitrator. After investigating the dispute, the arbitrator will submit the arbitration award to the government.

- **Resolution of industrial disputes:** The **central or state governments may appoint conciliation officers** to mediate and promote settlement of industrial disputes. These officers will **investigate the dispute and hold conciliation proceedings** to arrive at a fair and amicable settlement of the dispute. If no settlement is arrived at, then **any party to the dispute can make an application to the Industrial Tribunal.**
  - ▶ **Industrial Tribunals:** The Code provides for the **constitution of Industrial Tribunals for the settlement of industrial disputes.** An Industrial Tribunal will consist of two members: (i) a **Judicial Member**, who is a High Court Judge or has served as a District Judge or an Additional District Judge for a **minimum of three years**; and (ii) an **Administrative Member**, who has over 20 years of experience in the fields of economics, business, law, and labour relations.
  - ▶ The central government may also constitute **National Industrial Tribunals for settlement of industrial disputes** which: (i) involve questions of national importance, or (ii) could impact industrial establishments situated in more than one state. **Members of the National Industrial Tribunal** will include: (i) a **Judicial Member**, who has **been a High Court Judge**, and (ii) an **Administrative Member**, who has **been a Secretary in the central government.**

## 6

## MoU between Competition Commission of India and Government e Marketplace (GeM)

**Context:** Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace and rectify the malpractices such as cartelization.

- **Government e Marketplace**
  - ▶ GeM is a state-of-the-art **national public procurement platform of Ministry of Commerce and Industries** that has used technology to remove entry barriers for bonafide sellers and has created a vibrant e-marketplace with a wide range of goods and services.
  - ▶ It provides the **tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation** to facilitate the government users, achieve the best value for their money.
  - ▶ The purchases through GeM by Government users have been **authorised and made mandatory by Ministry of Finance.**
- **Competition Commission of India**
  - ▶ Competition Commission of India is a **statutory body**, responsible for enforcing the **Competition Act, 2002** throughout India.
  - ▶ It is the duty of the Commission to **eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition**, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.
  - ▶ The Commission is also required to **give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority** established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

## 7

## ENSURE Portal

- The portal “ENSURE”- **National Livestock Mission-EDEG is developed by NABARD** and is operated under the **Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries.**

- Under program “Entrepreneurship Development and Employment Generation” (EDEG), **subsidy payment for activities related to poultry, small ruminants, pigs etc. is paid through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).**
- Ensure portal will bring transparency in process of transferring subsidy.

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# INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEMES & INITIATIVES

## 1 National Infrastructure Pipeline

**Context:** Finance Minister has released Report of the Task Force on National Infrastructure Pipeline for 2019-2025.

### About:

- It is estimated that India would need to spend \$4.5 trillion on infrastructure by 2030 to sustain its growth rate.
- The endeavour of the **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)** is to make this happen in an efficient manner.
- These projects are on top of Rs. 51 lakh crore spent by the Centre and the states during the last six years and the new pipeline consists of 39 per cent projects each by the Centre and states and the balance by 22 per cent by private sector.

### Features of National Infrastructure Pipeline

- To achieve this objective, a **Task Force has been constituted** to draw up the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for each of the years from FY 2019-20 to FY 2024-25 with the **approval of the Finance Minister**.
- The **Task Force is chaired by Secretary, DEA** with CEO (NITI Aayog), Secretary (Expenditure), Secretary of the Administrative Ministries, and Additional Secretary (Investments), DEA as members and Joint Secretary (IPF), DEA as Member Secretary.

### Sector-wise:

- According to the Task Force, **Government has planned to increase participation of private sector in freight traffic**. It will add 30% of net cargo by 2025 and will increase private trains to 500.
- **Irrigation and rural infrastructure projects** would account for Rs. 7 lakh crore each. Rs. 3.07 lakh crore would be spent on **industrial infrastructure**. **Agriculture and social infrastructure** would account for the rest.
- **Road projects** will account for Rs. 63 lakh crore while another Rs. 13.68 lakh crore would be for **railway projects**.
- **Port projects** would see spending of Rs. 1 lakh crore and airports another Rs. 43 lakh crore. Rs. 16.29 lakh crore would be spent on **urban infrastructure** and Rs. 3.2 lakh crore in **telecom projects**.
- According to the sector-wise break-up of projects made available by the Finance Ministry, Rs. 54 lakh crore investment will flow in the **energy sector**, and of that Rs. 11.7 lakh crore would be in just the **power sector**.

- Rs. 42 lakh crore NIP projects which are in the implementation stage now include expressways, National Gas Grid and PMAY-G.

## 2 Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP)

### Context:

- The Central government is likely to miss the goal under the Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) which is to replace 1.34 crore conventional street lights with energy efficient LED street lights by March 2019.
- Energy Efficiency Services Limited has installed over 76.77 lakh LED street lights in 28 States or Union Territories till January 3, 2019.

### • What is Street Lighting Programme?

- ▶ Launched in 2015, **EESL's Street Light National Programme (SNLP)** has been instrumental in replacing over **50 lakh street lights in over 500 cities in India**, leading to 135 crore kWh of energy savings and cost saving of INR 742 crore every year.

### • What are its main components?

The programme has two main components: **LED and Smart Lights**

- ▶ While LED usage addresses the need for affordable energy-efficient infrastructure, the future-readiness of India's street lights also needed to be addressed, leading EESL to adopt "**smart light**" deployment.
- ▶ These "smart lights" are **connected through a web-based monitoring system** that enables remote operations and additional operational savings.

### • Which is the executing agency and how the programme is implemented?

- ▶ EESL, a **joint venture of four National Public Sector Enterprises** – NTPC Limited, PFC, REC and POWERGRID set up under Ministry of Power is the executing agency of the programme.
- ▶ Under the programme, **EESL replaces the conventional street lights with LEDs at its own costs**, with no upfront investment by the municipalities, thereby making their adoption even more attractive.
- ▶ Over a period, **EESL is repaid through the consequent reduction in energy and maintenance cost** of the municipality.
- ▶ A seven-year contract with the local bodies guarantees a **minimum energy saving of typically 50%** and provides free replacements and maintenance of lights at **no additional cost to the civic partners**.

## 3 Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Programme

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA)**. It envisions provision of Housing for All by 2022, when the Nation completes 75 years of its Independence.
- Beneficiaries include **Economically weaker section (EWS), low-income groups (LIGs) and Middle Income Groups (MIGs)**.
- "**Housing for All**" Mission for urban area is being implemented during 2015-2022 and this Mission will provide **central assistance to implementing agencies through States and UTs** for providing houses to all eligible families/beneficiaries by 2022.

- Mission will be implemented as **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)** except for the component of **credit linked subsidy which will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme**.
- The Mission seeks to address the housing requirement of urban poor including slum dwellers through following programme verticals:
- Slum rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers with participation of private developers **using land as a resource**.
- Promotion of Affordable Housing for weaker section through credit linked subsidy.
- Affordable Housing in Partnership with Public & Private sectors.
- Subsidy for beneficiary-led individual house construction /enhancement.
- **CLSS is a component of PMAY** under which, not only economically weaker sections, but **also middle-income groups can avail of home loans at reduced EMIs**.
- The aim of this scheme is to **construct more than two crore houses** across the length and breadth of the nation.
- Government provide **subsidy ranging between 1 lakh to 2.30 lakh** to people from above categories in order to make them secure.
- The government provide **an interest subsidy of 6.5%** on housing loans availed by the beneficiaries for a period of 15 years from the start of loan.
- The houses under this yojana would be **allotted to preferably the female member of the family**.
- It **covers the entire urban area** consisting of 4041 statutory towns with initial focus on 500 Class I cities.

## 4

**Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)**

**Context:** Ministry of Rural Development recently released the data on construction of houses for rural poor, built under the Indira AwasYojana (IAY) and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G).

**National Housing Bank (NHB)**

- It was a wholly owned **subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India**, which was set up on 9 July 1988 under the **National Housing Bank Act, 1987**.
- It operates as a principal agency to promote **housing finance institutions** both at local and regional levels and provides financial and other support to such institutions.

**About:**

- As per the data released, a total of 1.37 crore houses have been built so far in the rural areas of the country since April 2014 under the two housing schemes.
- However, the target of 1 crore houses under PMAY-G from 2016 onwards till March 2019 looks difficult to achieve.
- As of now, only 66 lakh houses have been constructed since 2016. With the deadline of March approaching, the government is expecting to complete another 35 lakh houses in next two months.
- The Ministry is projecting another 34.55 lakh houses under these rural housing schemes by March 2019.

## Main Features of PMAY-G

### • Aim and Means

- ▶ **PMAY-G aims at providing a pucca house**, with basic amenities, to all houseless householder and those households living in kutcha and dilapidated house, by 2022.
- ▶ The **immediate objective was to cover 1 crore household** living in kutcha house/dilapidated house in 3 years from 2016-17 to 2018- 19.
- ▶ The **minimum size of the house has been increased to 25 sq.mt**(from 20 sq.mt) with a hygienic cooking space. The unit assistance/per house assistance is **Rs. 1.20 lakh in plain and Rs 1.30 lakh in hilly states, difficult areas**.
- ▶ The beneficiary is entitled to **90.95 person day of unskilled labour from MGNREGS**. The assistance for construction of toilet is leveraged through convergence with SBM-G, MGNREGS or any other dedicated the source of funding.
- ▶ Convergence for piped drinking water, electricity connection, LPG gas connection etc. different Government programmers are also to be attempted.

### • Cost Sharing

- ▶ The **cost of unit assistance is to be shared between Central and State Government** in the ratio **60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for North Eastern and the Himalayan States**.
- ▶ From the annual budgetary grant for PMAY-G, **90% of funds is to be released to States/UTs** for the construction of new house under the scheme.

### • Technology and Transparency

- ▶ In PMAY-G, programme implementation and monitoring is to be carried out through an **end to end e-Governance model**- Using **AwaasSoft** and **Awaas App**.
- ▶ **AwaasSoft** is a work –flow enabled, web-based **electronic service delivery platform** through which all critical function of PMAY-G, right from identification of beneficiary to providing construction linked assistance (through PFMS), will be carried out;
- ▶ **AwaasApp**- the mobile application is to be used to **monitor real time, evidence based progress** of house construction through date and time stamped and geo-referenced photographs of the house.
- ▶ The two IT application helps identify the slip ups in the achievement of targets during the course of implementation of the programme.
- ▶ All **payments to beneficiary is to be through DBT** to beneficiary's Bank/post office accounts **registered in Awaas Soft MIS**.

### **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna-Urban**

- It also forms a component of housing for campaign of the government. The program is under the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.
- The Mission is being implemented from **2015-2022** and will **provide central assistance to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** and other implementing agencies through States/UTs for:
  - ▶ In-situ Rehabilitation of existing slum dwellers using land as a resource through private participation
  - ▶ Credit Linked Subsidy
  - ▶ Affordable Housing in Partnership
  - ▶ Subsidy for Beneficiary-led individual house construction/enhancement.

## 5 Global Housing Technology Challenge

**Context:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the Global Housing Technology Challenge (GHTC), to make the construction cost effective as well as innovative.

### About:

- The goal of GHTC is to **fast-track the construction of affordable housing** and meet the target of constructing 1.2 crore houses by 2022 **under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna** (Urban).
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) Mission is to provide all weather “pucca” houses to eligible beneficiaries.

### Aim

- GHTC- India **intends to get best globally available innovative construction technologies** through a challenge process.
- It seeks to **demonstrate and deliver ready to live-in houses in a shorter time**, with lower cost and quality construction in a sustainable manner.
- It also seeks to promote future technologies, to foster an environment of research and development in the country.

## 6 Grid Connected Rooftop Solar Programme

### Context:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs given its approval for the Phase-II of Grid Connected Rooftop Solar Programme for achieving cumulative capacity of 40,000 MW from Rooftop Solar (RTS) Projects by the year 2022.
- The programme will be implemented with total central financial support of Rs.11,814 crore.

### • What is Grid Connected Rooftop Solar Programme?

It is one of a series of World Bank’s engagements in India’s solar sector and is an important means for Ministry of New and Renewable Energy to implement its scheme to install 10GW of grid connected rooftop solar power on an accelerated basis.

### • The program has two components:

- Commercial Lending for GRPV
- Institutional support and Technical Assistance

### • Essentially two types of grid-connected rooftop systems are available:

- ▶ Grid-tied wherein systems are **primarily designed to supply the generated power to both the grid and the connected load** (at consumer end).
- ▶ These systems will **not generate power during a power failure** as the inverter shuts down the system to stop sending power into the grid and avoids the risk of electrocuting utility personnel who are working to repair the grid (i.e. islanding protection”).
- ▶ **Grid-interactive system works in conjunction with either a battery backup or diesel generator** to support the load even during a power failure.



- **Objective of the Programme**

- ▶ To **promote the grid connected** SPV rooftop and small SPV power generating plants among the residential, community, institutional, industrial and commercial establishments.
- ▶ To **mitigate the dependence on fossil fuel based electricity generation** and encourage environment friendly Solar electricity generation.
- ▶ To **create enabling environment for investment in solar energy sector** by private sector, state government and the individuals.
- ▶ To **create enabling environment for supply of solar power** from rooftop and small plants to the grid.
- ▶ To **encourage innovation in addressing market needs** and promoting sustainable business models and ensures employment opportunities.
- ▶ To **provide support to channel partners and potential beneficiaries**, within the framework of boundary conditions and in a flexible demand driven mode.
- ▶ To **create a paradigm shift needed for commoditization of grid connected SPV rooftop** applications.

## 7 Star Labelling Programmes

**Context:** Star Labelling Programmes, formulated by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), has been expanded to air-conditioners and washing machines. Initially, it will be implemented on a voluntary basis and will be valid up to December 31, 2020.

### More on News

- This initiative will **promote advancement of technology and energy efficiency** in microwave ovens which is becoming a popular household gadget.
- For washing machines, **BEE has also expanded the criteria for inclusion of water efficiency**, in addition to energy performance for grant of Star Rating.

- **What is BEE Star Rating?**

- ▶ **Energy 'labelling' is one of the most cost effective policy** tools for improving energy efficiency and lowering energy cost of appliances/equipment for the consumers.
- ▶ Star ratings are **provided to all the major kind of appliances** in the form of labels.
- ▶ **These star ratings are given between 1- 5** and they provide a basic sense of how energy efficient each product is, just in a single glance.
- ▶ The **manufacturers are officially required to put these labels** as per the Standards and Labelling Program introduced in 2006.

- **Big energy rating label**

- ▶ It is **aimed at appliances which have a constant usage** and consume more electricity.
- ▶ These labels show additional information such as the **yearly energy consumption of the product, brand name, product category** and much more.
- ▶ For consumers, this big label is helpful as it allows one to calculate the actual money you would spend in electricity bills for that particular product.
- ▶ **Products with a big label:** Refrigerators, air-conditioners, geysers and washing machines.

- **Small energy rating label**
  - ▶ **Small labels can be found in appliances which usually don't consume more energy.** These labels just give you a visual representation of the energy consumption levels by showing star ratings.
  - ▶ **Products with a small label:** Ceiling fans, tube lights, computers/laptops and televisions.

## 8 UNNATEE (Strategy Document)

**Context:** Bureau of Energy Efficiency has developed a national strategy document for accelerating energy efficiency in India titled UNNATEE(Unlocking National Energy Efficiency potential).

### More on News:

- The strategy document describes a **plain framework and implementation strategy** to establish a clear linkage between energy supply-demand scenarios and energy efficiency opportunities.
- The document **offers a comprehensive roadmap** to address India's environmental and climate change mitigation action through energy efficiency measures.
- The document has now been released for larger public consultation and seeking comments/valuable inputs from all the stakeholders.
- This exercise is **first of its kind**, clearly delineating the energy efficiency targets for the respective demand sectors upto the state levels.
- Developing India's blueprint of effective energy efficiency strategy is a **leap towards stimulating energy efficiency ecosystem** and enabling reduction of the pressure on demand.
- **PwC India has assisted BEE in executing this assignment.** This document has been prepared after extensive discussion with various departments, organisations and authorities.

### Bureau of Energy Efficiency

- It was **set up on 1st March 2002** under the provision of the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- Its mission is to assist developing policies and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles with the primary objective of reducing energy intensity of the Indian economy within the overall framework aforementioned Act.
- This will be achieved with active participation of all stakeholders, resulting into accelerated and sustained adoption of energy efficiency in all sectors.

## 9 Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)

**Context:** Cabinet approves "FMBAP" for Flood Management Works in entire country and River Management Activities and works related to Border Areas during 2017-18 to 2019-20.

### About:

- The Scheme "FMBAP" has been **framed by merging the components of two continuing XII Plan schemes** titled "Flood Management Programme (FMP)" and "River Management Activities and Works related to Border Areas (RMBA)".

- The aim of the Scheme is to **assist the State Governments** to provide reasonable degree of protection against floods in critical areas by adopting optimum combination of structural and non-structural measures and enhancing capabilities of State/Central Government officials in related fields.

### Features

- The works under the scheme will **protect valuable land from erosion and flooding** and help in maintaining peace along the border.
- The Scheme **aims at completion of the on-going projects already approved under FMP**. Further, the scheme **also caters to Hydro-meteorological observations and Flood Forecasting** on common rivers with the neighbouring countries.
- The Scheme also includes **survey and investigations, preparation of DPR etc.** of water resources projects on the common rivers with neighbouring countries like **Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, SaptaKosi-Sun Kosi Projects in Nepal** which would benefit both countries.

### Benefits

- It will be **implemented throughout the country** for effective flood management, erosion control and anti-sea erosion.
- The proposal will benefit towns, villages, industrial establishments, communication links, agricultural fields, infrastructure etc. from floods and erosion in the country.
- The **catchment area treatment works** will help in reduction of sediment load into rivers.

## 10 National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage

**Context:** The Union Cabinet chaired recently approved the setting up of a National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, to drive clean, connected, shared, sustainable and holistic mobility initiatives.

### About:

- Other than setting up of a National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage followings were also approved:
  - ▶ **Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) valid for 5 years** till 2024 to support setting up of a few large-scale, export-competitive integrated batteries and cell-manufacturing Giga plants in India.
  - ▶ Creation of a PMP valid for 5 years till 2024 to **localize production across the entire Electric Vehicles value chain**.
  - ▶ Both PMP schemes will be finalized by the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage.

### National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage

- The Mission with an Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee will be **chaired by CEO NITI Aayog**.
- The **Steering Committee will be comprised of Secretaries** from Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Power, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Heavy Industry, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, and Director General, Bureau of Industrial Standards.
- The Mission will recommend and drive the **strategies for transformative mobility and Phased Manufacturing Programmes** for EVs, EV Components and Batteries.
- A **Phased Manufacturing Program (PMP)** will be launched to localize production across the entire EV value chain.

- The National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage will **determine the contours of PMP, and will finalise the details of such a program.**
- The details of the value addition that can be achieved with each phase of localisation will be finalised by the Mission with a clear Make in India strategy for the electric vehicle components as well as battery.
- The **Mission will coordinate with key stakeholders** in Ministries/ Departments and the states to integrate various initiatives to transform mobility in India.
- A phased roadmap to implement **battery manufacturing at Giga-scale** will be considered with initial focus on large-scale module and pack assembly plants by 2019-20, followed by integrated cell manufacturing by 2021-22.
- Details of the PMP for Batteries shall be formulated by the Mission. The Mission will ensure holistic and comprehensive growth of the battery manufacturing industry in India.
  - ▶ It will **prepare the necessary roadmap that will enable India to leverage upon its size and scale** to produce innovative, competitive multi-modal mobility solutions that can be deployed globally in diverse Context:s.
  - ▶ It will **define the roadmap for transformative mobility in “New India”** by introducing a sustainable mobility ecosystem and fostering Make-in-India to boost domestic manufacturing and employment generation in the country.

## 11 Real Estate Investment Trust

**Context:** The recent initial public offering (IPO) of India’s first Real Estate Investment Trust (Embassy REIT) was subscribed 2.5 times, with the share sale generating a demand of over Rs 5,300 crore.

### More on News

- The portion reserved for high net-worth individuals and retail investors was subscribed 3.1 times.
- REIT had also raised capital by allocating units to institutional investors as part of its anchor book allocation.
- The anchor book is that part of an IPO which bankers can allot to institutional investors on a discretionary basis.
- The Embassy Office Parks REIT IPO, backed by global private equity firm Blackstone Group LP and Bengaluru-based developer Embassy Property Developments Pvt. Ltd.
- **What is Real Estate Investment Trust?**
  - REIT is a **process to generate funds from a lot of investors**, to directly invest in properties like offices, residential units, hotels, shopping centers, warehouses, etc.
  - **All REITs will be listed with the stock exchanges**, as they would be structured like trusts.
  - Consequently, **REIT assets will be held with independent trustees for unit holders/ investors.**
- **What is the role of the trustees in a REI?**
  - ▶ The trustees of REITs have defined duties, which typically involve ensuring compliance and adherence to all applicable laws that protect the rights of the investors.

- **What are the objective of REITs?**

- ▶ It **aims to provide the investors with dividends** that are generated from the capital gains accruing from the sale of the commercial assets.
- ▶ The **trust distributes 90% of the income among its investors** via dividends.
- ▶ Apart from minimum entry level, a **REIT is supposed to provide diversified and safe investment opportunities** with reduced risks and under a professional management, to ensure maximum return on investments.

## 12 FAME India Scheme

- The FAME India (Faster Adoption and Manufacture of (Hybrid and) Electric Vehicles) Scheme, **launched in 2015**, is an **incentive scheme** for the promotion of electric and hybrid vehicles in the country.
- The scheme aims to **promote electric mobility** and the scheme gives financial incentives for enhancing electric vehicle production and creation of electric transportation infrastructure.
- The **incentives are provided in the form of subsidies to manufactures** of electric vehicles and infrastructure providers of electric vehicles.
- **FAME India is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan.** Main thrust of FAME is to encourage electric vehicles by providing subsidies.

### Phase-I of the Scheme:

- The Phase-I of this Scheme was **initially launched for a period of 2 years**, commencing from 1<sup>st</sup>April 2015, which was subsequently extended from time to time and the last extension was allowed up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.
- The 1<sup>st</sup>Phase of FAME India Scheme was implemented through four focus areas namely:
  - ▶ Demand Creation
  - ▶ Technology Platform
  - ▶ Pilot Project
  - ▶ Charging Infrastructure
- Market creation through demand incentives was aimed at incentivizing all vehicle segments i.e. 2-Wheelers, 3-Wheelers Auto, Passenger 4-Wheeler vehicles, Light Commercial Vehicles and Buses.

### What's new in the second phase?

- FAME II will **cover buses** with EV technology; electric, plug-in hybrid and **strong hybrid four wheelers; electric three-wheelers** including e-rickshaws and electric two-wheelers.
- Under the second phase of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India (FAME-II) scheme, 10 lakh registered electric two-wheelers with a maximum ex-factory price will be eligible to avail incentive of Rs 20,000 each.
- It will also support 5 lakh e-rickshaws having ex-factory price of up to Rs. 5 lakh with an **incentive of Rs 50,000 each.**
- **FAME-II will offer an incentive** of Rs 1.5 lakh each to 35,000 electric four-wheelers with an ex-factory price of up to Rs 15 lakh, and incentive of Rs 13,000 each to 20,000 strong hybrid four-wheelers with ex-factory price of up to Rs 15 lakh.
- It will support 7,090 e-buses with an incentive of up to Rs 50 lakh each having an ex-factory price of up to Rs 2 crore

## 13 Delhi Government's Draft Electric Vehicle Policy

**Context:** Vehicular pollution has been a consistent source of air pollution in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. It contributes up to 30% of particulate pollution.

- Thus, in a move towards adopting a cleaner mode of transportation, **Delhi government has launched draft electric vehicle policy.**
- The policy addresses some of the major concerns that are required for **rapid adoption of zero emission electric vehicles in the city.**
- **India is a member of the Electric Vehicles Initiative (EVI)**, a multi-governmental policy forum dedicated to accelerating the deployment of EVs. The **EV@30 campaign**, launched in 2017, sets a collective aspirational goal for all EVI members **to have EVs contribute to 30% of all vehicle sales by 2030.**
- **In 2013, Government of India had launched a National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020.** Under the mission plan, the Scheme for Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid&) Electric Vehicles in India (**'FAME India'**) **was launched in March, 2015** for two years as Phase-I, which has subsequently been extended up to 31 March, 2019.
- Despite Central and State government incentives, **pure electric vehicle penetration currently remains quite low in India**, About: 0.1% for cars, ~0.2% for 2 wheelers and practically nil for commercial vehicles.

### Delhi government's Draft Electric Vehicle Policy

- Since two-thirds of new vehicle registrations in Delhi comprises of two wheelers (i.e., motorcycles and scooters), with the most popular segments being motorcycles between 110-125cc and scooters between 90-125cc. Any attempt at electrification of Delhi's vehicle fleet needs to address these segments.
- The **draft policy** will focus on **incentivizing the purchase and use of electric two-wheelers** and supporting the electrification of public/shared transport.
- The policy further encourages the usage of electric rickshaws, three wheeler goods carriers, app-based e-autos and e-cabs.
- For all for short first and last mile connectivity trips on e-cab/e-auto rides taken through an app-based aggregator, **Delhi Gov. plans to offer 'cash back' rebates.** These rebates will be capped at a maximum of 20% of the trip cost and an absolute value of Rs 10 per ride
- All petrol and diesel-powered vehicle users will pay a **'Pollution Cess'** on the sale of fuel beginning with April 2019. **A higher Cess will be levied on Diesel**, being a more polluting fuel and a known carcinogen, and the existing Diesel Cess will be subsumed under this.
- The **Pollution Cess will be reviewed and revised once every year** to fund the increased subsidy bill due to higher adoption of Electric Vehicles.
- **Air Quality Parking Surcharge** will be levied on Base Parking Fees -BPF and applicable to all ICE vehicles only.
- Funding: **'feebate' concept has been explored i.e. by adopting measures by which inefficient or polluting vehicles incur a surcharge (fee-) while efficient ones receive a rebate (-bate).**

## 14 City Momentum Index

**Context:** American professional services and investment management company Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated or JLL has released its 6th City Momentum Index.

## Highlights

- **Bengaluru is the world's most dynamic city** among 131 major established and emerging business hubs globally.
- **Closely following Bengaluru is Hyderabad** that is ranked second with Delhi (4th), Pune (5th), and Chennai (7th) featuring in top 10 cities. At 15th position, **Kolkata was the sixth Indian city ranked amongst top 20.**
- With 19 of the top 20 cities from Asia Pacific, the rankings highlight and showcase the region's continued rapid urbanization and strong economic growth.
- **Asia continues to show strong momentum**, with cities that are successfully expanding their innovation economy punching above their weight in terms of attracting capital, companies and people.
- **What is special About: 2019 ranking?**
  - ▶ **Bangaluru and Hyderabad**
    - Both Bengaluru and Hyderabad have a thriving **information technology and start-up culture** which has helped them top the rankings.
    - As **the Silicon Valley of India, Bengaluru** has continued to witness much traction in its real estate sector over the years.
    - Backed by a strong commercial sector, the city's retail, hospitality and residential sectors have also gained prominence with the **city being recognized as the third largest hospitality market** and the leading retail market in India.
    - Hyderabad as an **emerging investment destination** has been in the spotlight for its growth potential and investments from all major technology led companies around the globe.
    - The **real estate market of Hyderabad has been one of the best performing in India** for last few years in terms of the absorption and new launches.
- **What is the special note on India?**
  - ▶ Some of India's fastest growing cities have been successful in recent years in drawing high levels of foreign direct investment with structural reforms also encouraging greater interest from foreign real estate investors who are seeking to tap into the country's favourable growth dynamics.
  - ▶ Post the implementation of **landmark policy reforms such as RERA and GST** coupled with a focus on improving infrastructure and improving ease of doing business, the government's reforms driven agenda and measures are expected to bring in more transparency in the real estate sector and give a strong impetus to the sector.

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# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY & DEFENCE

## 1 107<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress

**Context:** Recently, PM inaugurated the 107<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru.

### More on News:

- The theme of the **107<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress** is **“Science and Technology: Rural Development”**.
- The Congress is to be hosted by the Department of Science and Technology.
- The event acts as a common platform for researchers, scientists, and academicians. Around 28 plenary sessions are to be held during the event. It includes leading technologies such as Climate Smart Agriculture for food security, challenges in cancer drugs, nanomaterials for energy, solutions for oil and gas, environment and health care. For the first time, Farmers Science Congress is to be held on the sidelines
  - ▶ **Farmers Science Congress:** The congress will cover themes of innovation on integrated agriculture. It will also focus on themes of doubling farmers’ income, farmer empowerment, conservation, biodiversity, etc. The experts from ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) and UAS (University of Agricultural Sciences) will also participate in the event along with the farmers whose innovative methodologies have brought in huge harvests.
  - ▶ **Children Science Congress:** The Children Science Congress also called the “Rashtriya Kishre Vaigyanik Sammelana” will also be held alongside 107<sup>th</sup> India Indian Science Congress. The congress aims to motivate students and increase their participation in scientific and technological fields. Apart from these, women science, the congress will also be held showcasing women’s achievements. Also, the VC Science congress will be held to address the need for higher education institutions. The event will also hold Science Communicators Meet.
  - ▶ **Women Science Congress:** It aims to provide a single platform for women working in different arena of science and technology to showcase their achievements and experiences. It will also prepare a vision document or a road map for women in science and technology and recommend policies to enhance the role and utilize the full potential of women in science and technology.
  - ▶ **Vigyan Sancharak Sammelan - 2020 (Science Communicators Meet - 2020):** It is an initiative for Science communicators’ for professional growth. This programme will focus on the theme of **“Science & Technology: Rural Development ”**. Science Communicators’ role is to facilitate public engagement with scientific issues. Science communication plays an integral part in one’s scientific career.



- ▶ **Mega Science Exhibition - PRIDE OF INDIA ISC EXPO:** It is a unique platform for organizations from the government, private and public sector to showcase their achievements in the field of science and technology.

### **Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA)**

- It owes its origin to the foresight and initiative of two British Chemists, namely, Professor J. L. Simonsen and Professor P.S. MacMahon. The first meeting of the Congress was held from January 15-17, 1914 at the premises of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, with the Honourable Justice Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, as President.

#### **What are the main objectives of the ISCA?**

- To advance and promote the cause of science in India
- To hold an annual congress at a suitable place in India
- To publish such proceedings, journals, transactions, and other publications as may be considered desirable.
- To secure and manage funds and endowments for the promotion of Science including the rights of disposing of or selling all or any portion of the properties of the Association.
- To do and perform any or all other acts, matters and things as are conducive to, or incidental to, or necessary for, the above objects.

## **2 UNNATI**

**Context:** UNNATI- (Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly & Training) programme organized by ISRO was inaugurated recently in Bengaluru.

### **UNNATI**

- Advanced as a capacity building programme on Nanosatellite development, it is an initiative by ISRO to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space (UNISPACE-50).
- The programme provides opportunities to the participating developing countries to strengthen in assembling, integrating and testing Nanosatellite.
- The programme aims at capacity building in satellite technology for participants from countries interested in developing a space programme by providing hands-on experience in building and testing of nanosatellites.
- UNNATI programme is planned to be conducted for 3 years by U.R. Rao Satellite Centre of ISRO in 3 batches and will target to benefit officials of 45 countries.
- The primary objectives of the programme are:
  - ▶ To offer a simplified and increased exposure to satellite fabrication technologies, as part of the UNISPACE initiative
  - ▶ To provide a theoretical course on satellite technology
  - ▶ To provide an intensive course on nanosatelliterealisation, covering mission aspects, design, fabrication, assembly, integration & testing
  - ▶ To provide hands-on training to assemble, integrate and test a low cost, modular nanosatellite

### 3 National Supercomputing Mission

**Context:** IIT-Kharagpur will receive a 1.3 petaflop high power computing facility and a data centre under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

#### More on News:

- It envisages empowering our national academic and R&D institutions to 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)**.
- Academic and R&D institutions, as well as key user departments/ministries, would participate by using these facilities and develop applications of national relevance.
- The Mission also includes the development of highly professional **High-Performance Computing (HPC)** aware human resource for meeting challenges of development of these applications.
- The Mission implementation would bring supercomputing within the reach of the large Scientific & Technology community in the country and enable the country with a capacity of solving multi-disciplinary grand challenge problems.
- The Mission is implemented and steered jointly by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY)** at an estimated cost of Rs.4500 crore over seven years (2015-2022).
- The first Supercomputer designed and built under the Build approach of National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) by C-DAC at the Indian Institute of Technology (BHU), Varanasi was dedicated to the scientific and research community of the nation to strengthen the research and development activities in the country.
- Named "PARAM Shivay", the supercomputer uses more than one lakh twenty thousand compute cores (CPU + GPU cores) to offer a peak compute power of 833 TeraFlops.

#### Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (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.

#### National Knowledge Network (NKN)

- It is a state-of-the-art Pan-India network and is a revolutionary step towards creating a knowledge society without boundaries.
- It will provide unprecedented benefits to the knowledge community and mankind at large.

### 4 National Mission on Quantum Technologies & Applications (NM-QTA)

**Context:** The government in its budget 2020 has announced a National Mission on Quantum Technologies & Applications (NM-QTA) with a total budget outlay of Rs. 8000 Crore for five years to be implemented by the Department of Science & Technology (DST).

#### About: the Mission:

- The new mission will oversee the development of quantum technologies for communications, computing, materials development, and cryptography.

- It will coordinate the work of scientists, industry leaders, and government departments
- **Implementing authority:** The move will be implemented by the **Department of Science & Technology (DST)**.
- **Focus area:** The areas of focus for the Mission will be in fundamental science, translation, technology development, human and infrastructural resource generation, innovation and start-ups to address issues concerning national priorities.

### Quantum Technology:

- Quantum technologies are rapidly developing globally with huge disruptive potential.
- Quantum technology is a class of technology that works by using the principles of quantum mechanics (the physics of sub-atomic particles), including quantum entanglement and quantum superposition.
  - ▶ **Quantum entanglement** is when two atoms are connected, or entangled, despite being separated.
  - ▶ **Quantum superposition** is the theory that sub-atomic particles exist in multiple states simultaneously.
- It concerns the control and manipulation of quantum systems, to achieve information processing beyond the limits of the classical world.
- Quantum technology is opening up new frontiers in computing, communications, cybersecurity with wide-spread applications.
- It is expected that lots of commercial applications would emerge from theoretical constructs that are developing in this area.

## 5 Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)

- It was launched by the Government in April 2018, primarily aimed at creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace
- It aims at engaging Industries including MSMEs, start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes & academia for defence technology to be made and fostered in India.
- It will provide them grants/funding and other support to carry out R&D which has good potential for future adoption for Indian defence and aerospace needs.
- iDEX is funded and managed by a '**Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)**' which has been formed as a '**not for profit**' company as per **Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013 for this purpose**.
- DIO has been created by the two founder members i.e. Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) - HAL & BEL.
- iDEX functions as the executive arm of DIO, carrying out all the required activities while DIO will provide high-level policy guidance to iDEX.

### Key Functions of iDex:

- Co-Innovation/co-creation
- Piloting of candidate technologies in important platforms
- Indigenization of various defence and aerospace-related platforms being manufactured in the country based on ToT.

## 6 Defence India Start-Up Challenge

- Taking the iDEX initiative further, Defence India Startup Challenge “has been launched by the Ministry in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission.
- It aims at supporting Startups/MSMEs/Innovators to create prototypes and/or commercialize products/solutions in the area of National Defence and Security.
- The vision of the Challenge is two-fold:
  - ▶ Help create functional prototypes of products/technologies relevant for national security (prototyping) and spur fast-moving innovation in the India defence sector
  - ▶ Help new tech products/technologies find a market and early customer (commercialization) in the form of the Indian Defence Establishment.

## 7 Mission SHAKTI – Growing Stature of India’s Space Programme

**Context:** Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile test ‘Mission Shakti’ from Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.

### About:

- A DRDO-developed **Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) Interceptor Missile** successfully engaged an Indian **orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in a ‘Hit to Kill’ mode**. The interceptor missile was a three-stage missile with two solid rocket boosters.
- The test has demonstrated the Nation’s capability to defend its assets in outer space. It is a vindication of the strength and robust nature of DRDO’s programmes.
- Anti-satellite technology has so far been in the hands of very few countries: the United States, Russia and China.
- The acquisition and demonstration of this technology make India a member of an elite group of countries.
- Since no treaties are governing the use of ASAT, India is not in violation of any international conventions.

### Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)

- It works under Department of Defence Research and Development of Ministry of Defence.
- DRDO is working in various areas of military technology which include aeronautics, armaments, combat vehicles, electronics, instrumentation engineering systems, missiles, materials, naval systems, advanced computing, simulation and life sciences.
- DRDO while striving to meet the cutting edge weapons technology requirements provides ample spinoff benefits to the society at large thereby contributing to the nation building.

### Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile

- Anti-satellite weapons are space weapons designed to incapacitate or destroy satellites for strategic military purposes.

**Interceptor missiles:**

- Consist of a three-stage booster rocket (meaning three engines are used in succession), and a “kill vehicle,” which travels alone after the last booster separates. Using intercept data, the kill vehicle is guided toward an intercept point, where it views the target using its own sensors. From there, using small thrusters to adjust its direction, the interceptor attempts to track and collide with the incoming warhead.

**Outer Space Treaty of 1967:**

- It prohibits countries from placing into orbit around the Earth “any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction”. It also prohibits the stationing of such weapons on celestial bodies, like the moon, or in outer space. India is a signatory of it.

**8****'Project NETRA (Network for space object Tracking and Analysis)'**

**Context:** The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has initiated 'Project NETRA' to safeguard Indian space assets from debris and other harm.

**About:**

- **What is Project NETRA (Network for space object Tracking and Analysis)?**
  - ▶ **Project NETRA is an early warning system in space to detect debris and other hazards to Indian satellites.**
  - ▶ The project is estimated to cost ₹ 400 crores.
  - ▶ Under NETRA, the ISRO plans to put up many observational facilities:
    - connected radars, telescopes
    - data processing units
    - a control centre
  - ▶ They can, among others, spot, track and catalogue objects as small as 10 cm, up to a range of 3,400 km and equal to a space orbit of around 2,000 km.
- **Significance of the project:**
  - ▶ The project will give India its capability in **space situational awareness (SSA)** like the other space powers — which is used to 'predict' threats from debris to Indian satellites.
  - ▶ NETRA's eventual goal is to capture the GEO, or geostationary orbit, the scene at 36,000 km where communication satellites operate.
  - ▶ The effort would make India a part of international efforts towards tracking, warning About: and mitigating space debris.
- **Need:**
  - ▶ Currently, there are 15 functional Indian communication satellites in the geostationary orbit of 36,000 km; 13 remote sensing satellites in LEO of up to 2,000 km; and eight navigation satellites in medium earth orbits. Their protection is of utmost importance for India.

**9****Project 75 India**

**Context:** Defence Ministry has begun the process to shortlist potential Indian shipyards for the construction of six new-generation conventional stealth submarines for the Indian Navy.

**More on News:**

- The **Ministry of Defence** has issued the “**Expression of Interest**” (**EoI**) to shortlist potential **Indian Strategic Partners (SPs)** under the strategic partnership model (SP Model) for the construction of six conventional submarines under **Project 75 India** of the Indian Navy in collaboration with the selected manufacturer.
- Under the SP model, the government will also nominate the foreign **original equipment manufacturer (OEM)** under the umbrella of ‘**Make in India**’.
- This is a step towards opening a second production line for diesel-electric submarines in India. The first was the procurement of **111 Naval Utility Helicopters (NUH)**.
- Four foreign firms have so far responded to the Indian government’s request for proposal for the project. These are French firm Naval Group, Russia’s Rosoboronexport Rubin Design Bureau, Germany’s ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems and Sweden’s Saab.

**Project 75 India (P-75I)**

- P75I was first cleared in 2007 but lay dormant until now after undergoing numerous changes.
- The P75I project is part of a 30-year submarine building plan that ends in 2030.
- The project cost is About: Rs. 45,000 crore.
- As part of this plan, India was to build 24 submarines — 18 conventional submarines and six nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs) — as an effective deterrent against China and Pakistan.
- This project envisages the construction of six conventional submarines with better sensors and weapons and the Air Independent Propulsion System (AIP).
- The project has been cleared under the strategic partnership model.

**10 National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage**

**Context:** The Union Cabinet chaired recently approved the setting up of a National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, to drive clean, connected, shared, sustainable and holistic mobility initiatives.

**More on News:**

- Other than setting up of a National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage followings were also approved:
  - ▶ Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) valid for 5 years till 2024 to support setting up of a few large-scale, export-competitive integrated batteries and cell-manufacturing Giga plants in India.
  - ▶ Creation of a PMP valid for 5 years till 2024 to localize production across the entire Electric Vehicles value chain.

**National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage**

- The Mission with an Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee will be **chaired by CEO NITI Aayog**.
- The Mission will recommend and drive the **strategies for transformative mobility and Phased Manufacturing Programmes** for EVs, EV Components and Batteries.
- A **Phased Manufacturing Program (PMP)** will be launched to localize production across the entire EV value chain.
- It will determine the contours of PMP and will finalise the details of such a program.

- The details of the value addition that can be achieved with each phase of localisation will be finalised by the Mission with a clear Make in India strategy for the electric vehicle components as well as battery.
- The Mission will coordinate with key stakeholders in Ministries/ Departments and the states to integrate various initiatives to transform mobility in India.
- A phased roadmap to implement battery manufacturing at Giga-scale will be considered with an initial focus on the large-scale module and pack assembly plants by 2019-20, followed by integrated cell manufacturing by 2021-22.
- Details of the PMP for Batteries shall be formulated by the Mission. The Mission will ensure the holistic and comprehensive growth of the battery manufacturing industry in India.
- It will prepare the necessary roadmap that will enable India to leverage upon its size and scale to produce innovative, competitive multi-modal mobility solutions that can be deployed globally in diverse contexts.
- It will define the roadmap for transformative mobility in “New India” by introducing a sustainable mobility ecosystem and fostering Make-in-India to boost domestic manufacturing and employment generation in the country.

## 11 Samudrayaan Project

**Context:** India to join developed nations in ocean studies with ‘Samudrayaan’ project

### More on news:

- The ‘**Samudrayaan**’ is a **part of the Ministry of Earth Sciences**’ pilot project for deep ocean mining for rare minerals.
- The project proposes to send a submersible vehicle with three persons to a depth of About: 6000 metres to carry out deep underwater studies.
- The indigenously developed vehicle is capable of crawling on the sea bed at a depth of six kilometre for 72 hours.
- Similar to ISRO’s plan to carry persons on a space mission, NIOT has undertaken Samudrayaan. The Rs. 200 crores project proposes to carry three persons in a submersible vehicle to a depth of 6000 metres under the sea for various studies.

## 12 SATHI

**Context:** The Department of Science & Technology has launched a unique scheme called Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institutes (SATHI).

### More on News:

- The scheme will address the need for building shared, professionally managed and strong Science and Technology infrastructure in the country which is readily accessible to academia, start-ups, manufacturing, industry and R&D labs
- These Centres are expected to house major analytical instruments to provide common services of high-end analytical testing, thus reducing dependency on foreign sources. The centres would be operated with a transparent, open access policy.

- DST has already set up three such centres in the country, one each at IIT Kharagpur, IIT Delhi and BHU at a total cost of Rs 375 Cores. The plan is to set up five SATHI Centres every year for the next four years. Impact.
- SATHI will address the problems of accessibility, maintenance, redundancy and duplication of expensive equipment in Institutions, while reaching out to the less endowed organizations in need, e.g., industry, MSMEs, startups and State Universities.
- It will also foster a strong culture of collaboration between institutions and across disciplines to take advantage of developments, innovations, and expertise in diverse areas.

## 13 HOG Technology in Railways

**Context:** Railway Ministry is upgrading all existing Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches with the Head on Generation (HOG) technology. This would cause the trains to become more cost-efficient and less polluting.

- **What is Head on Generation (HOG) technology?**
  - ▶ The system runs the train's 'hotel load' (a load of air conditioning, lights, fans, and pantry, etc.) by drawing electricity from the overhead electric lines through the pantograph.
  - ▶ The power supply from the overhead cable is 750 volts at single-phase, and a transformer with a winding of 945 kVA converts it to a 750 Volts 50 Hz output at 3-phase. This energy is then provided to the compartments.
- **How is it different from the present EOG technology?**
  - ▶ Under the End on Generation (EOG) system, the train's 'hotel load' (a load of air conditioning, lights, fans, and pantry, etc.) is provided with electricity from two large diesel generator sets, which supply 3-phase power at 750 Volts 50 Hz to the entire length of the train.
  - ▶ Each coach then picks up the power supply through a 60 KVA transformer, bringing down the voltage to 110 volts at which level the equipment in the compartment is run. The generator cars are attached to either end of the train, giving the system its name.

## 14 AIM-SIRIUS Deep Technology Learning, Innovation Programme

**Context:** The second phase of NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Russia's SIRIUS Deep Technology Learning and Innovation Programme 2019 in Sochi comes to an end as 25 Indian students returned today with best practices of contemporary innovation and entrepreneurship.

### More on News:

- SIRIUS hosted an **eight-day project-oriented educational program** from 28 November to 8 December 2019. It was held in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between AIM and SIRIUS last year.
- All 50 Russian and Indian students shared best contemporary innovation practices under various categories: **IT & Data Analysis, Clean Energy, Biotech, Remote Earth Sensing and Drones & Robotics.**
- Under '**Clean Energy**', students created a carbon-free energy system/island where researchers from all over the world can lead research on tech advancement.
- **Photo-biotechnology under the 'Biotech' category** was also designed for the production of bio antioxidants from microalgae. It overcomes the problems of food shortage and environmental



pollution by making better and safe food and absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> from the environment for photosynthesis.

- SIRIUS Innovation Festival **held in India last year** witnessed a delegation of 10 Russian student innovators and 10 Indian innovators from the best performing Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs).

## 15 Wifi Access Network Interface (WANI)

**Context:** The Indian telecom regulator, TRAI, recently proposed setting up a Wifi Access Network Interface (WANI) architecture with the ability to delink telecom infrastructure from access services.

### More on News:

- A **single interoperable platform** that will enable the **delivery of data and WiFi services** to all Indians is the heart of India's new Digital Communications Policy (2018–2022).
- TRAI is inviting participation from companies/entities in the country to help set up a nation-wide interoperable WiFi network in the form of **Public Data Offices (PDOs)** across the country.
- The new pilot project named **Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (WANI)** will run on a **partnership model**.
- **Small entrepreneurs and shop owners can set up WiFi hotspots (or PDOs)** by acquiring bandwidth from multiple Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and **re-selling bandwidth as data to end customers at a cheaper rate**.
- The pilot project of WANI will accept any **company, proprietorship, societies, NGOs, etc.** to help set up paid public WiFi access points across the country using a shared model.
- These companies will be able to **purchase bandwidth from Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs)—a bandwidth aggregator** that aggregates spectrum from multiple ISPs and provide them to PDO owners at cheaper rates.
- In this manner, the cost of setting up WiFi infrastructure will be shared **without PDOs requiring to register for a telecom license**.
- Wifire, PayTM, Linq and C-DOT have created **WANI enabled mobile apps** for consumers.

## 16 Maritime Information Sharing Workshop

**Context:** The Indian Navy has hosted a Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW) under the aegis of the Information Fusion Centre — Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Gurugram.

### More on News:

- Over 41 delegates from 29 countries of the IOR and beyond participated in the two-day event.
- The aim was to acquaint participants About: IFC-IOR and its information-sharing mechanisms and promote the sharing of best practices in this field.
- The workshop was meant to enhance coordination and to improve response to the myriad security and safety challenges that IOR faces.
- Themes such as **maritime terrorism, piracy, human and drug trafficking, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; and the legal perspective of combating** were at the core of the workshop.

**Information Fusion Centre –Indian Ocean Region**

- It is an initiative of the Indian Navy supported by the Government of India.
- It was launched in December 2018 for enhancing maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean Region.
- It is collocated with the **Information Management and Analysis Centre** which is jointly administered by the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard.
- It has so far established linkages with more than 16 countries and 13 international maritime security agencies.
- The information exchange at the IFC-IOR would be initially undertaken by virtual means, using telephone calls, faxes, emails and video conferencing over the internet.
- Subsequently, to enable better interaction, quicker analysis of information and provide timely inputs, the IFC-IOR would host Liaison Officers from partner countries.
- IFC-IOR would also undertake the conduct of exercises and training capsules in maritime information collation and sharing.

## 17 Govt to Host Artificial Intelligence Summit 'RAISE 2020'

**Context:** India will organize its first Artificial Intelligence summit- "RAISE 2020: Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020" between April 11-12, 2020 in New Delhi.

### More on News:

- **Organized by** - the union government in coordination with the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- The two-day summit will be organized to spearhead social empowerment, inclusion, and transformation.
- **Aim** - To outline India's vision for using the power of AI responsibly to transform the social landscape for a better future.
- The summit will enable the smooth exchange of ideas to create mass awareness About: the need to ethically develop and practice AI in the digital era.

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# ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

## SCHEMES & INITIATIVES

### 1 Green India Mission

**Context:** According to a Parliamentary committee report 'Performance of the National Action Plan on Climate Change', Green India Mission that is aimed at "protecting, restoring and enhancing India's diminishing forest cover and responding to climate change", is grossly underfunded.

- **Highlights of the Report**

- ▶ During 2017-18, Rs 47.8 crore has been allocated for the scheme which is grossly insufficient as the committed liability for 2015-16 and 2016-17 is Rs 89.53 crore which is much more than the budget allocated.
- ▶ However, the scheme is proposed for 10 years with an outlay of Rs 60,000 crore.
- ▶ The panel raises concerns About: the targets set by GIM on India's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- ▶ The committee pointed out that the afforestation done under the mission was only aimed at increasing tree count without considering the soil and weather conditions.
- ▶ Though plantation activity is aimed at increasing green cover, they cannot replace actual forest cover. Forest has plants and trees of numerous varieties and sizes and shapes. Forests grow naturally and according to climate conditions existing in the area.

- **What is the Green India Mission?**

- ▶ The National Mission for Green India (GIM) is one of the eight Missions outlined under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
- ▶ It aims at protecting; restoring and enhancing India's diminishing forest cover and responding to climate change by a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures.
- ▶ This mission has adopted an integrated cross-sectoral approach as it has been implemented on both public as well as private lands with a key role of the local communities in planning, decision making, implementation, and monitoring.

- **What are the main objectives?**

- ▶ To increase forest/tree cover to the extent of 5 million hectares (mha) and improve quality of forest/tree cover on another 5 mha of forest/non-forest lands;

- ▶ To improve/enhance eco-system services like carbon sequestration and storage (in forests and other ecosystems), hydrological services and biodiversity; along with provisioning services like fuel, fodder, and timber and non-timber forest produces (NTFPs); and
- ▶ To increase forest-based livelihood income of About: 3 million households.

### **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**

- Government is implementing the NAPCC to enhance the ecological sustainability of India's development path and address climate change.
- NAPCC comprises, inter alia, of eight National Missions in specific areas of **Solar Energy, Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Habitat, Water, Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system, Green India, Sustainable Agriculture and Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change** with the approved funding under sectoral outlays.

## **2 Sixth National Report (NR6) on Biological Diversity**

### **Context:**

- India submitted its Sixth National Report (NR6) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and became one of the first five countries in the world and the first in Asia to do so.
- The report was submitted online to the CBD Secretariat during the inaugural session of the 13th National Meeting of the State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) organized by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA).

### **India's sixth report an appraisal of efforts and initiatives**

- While submitting the sixth National Report, India has many achievements in its name and at the same time, a lot remains to be done. Some of the important aspects of Indian biodiversity conservation and protection are:
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), also released the document '**Progress on India's National Biodiversity Targets: A Preview**' on the occasion.
- The NR6 provides an update of progress in the achievement of 12 National Biodiversity Targets (NBT) developed under the Convention process in line with the 20 global Aichi biodiversity targets.
- The Report highlights that while India has exceeded/overachieved two NBTs, it is on track to achieve eight NBTs and in respect of the remaining two NBTs also, India is striving to meet the targets by the stipulated time of 2020.
- With well over **20 percent of its total geographical area under biodiversity conservation**, India has exceeded the terrestrial component of 17 percent of Aichi target 11, and 20 percent of corresponding NBT relating to areas under biodiversity management.
- As a mega-diverse country harbouring **nearly 7-8% of globally recorded species while supporting 18% of the global human population on a mere 2.4% of the world's land area**, India's quest for inclusive economic development while maintaining the integrity of its natural capital is being pursued through various programmes and strategies.

### **Sixth National Report under the Convention on Biological Diversity**

- Submission of national reports is a mandatory obligation on Parties to international treaties, including CBD.
- COP 13 adopted guidelines, including reporting templates, for the sixth national report due 31 December 2018.

- The sixth national reports should provide a final review of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including relevant national targets, based on information concerning the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and other actions taken to implement the Convention.
- Parties are encouraged to involve relevant stakeholders in the preparation of their national report including representatives of indigenous people and local communities, business, civil society, and non-governmental organizations.
- This includes national focal points for the **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization** as well as the national focal points for the biodiversity-related Conventions, **the Rio Conventions** and other relevant international and regional conventions.

#### **Convention on Biological Diversity:**

- It is one of the important conventions that **resulted in the Earth Summit of 1992**. The Convention on Biological Diversity was inspired by the world community's growing commitment to sustainable development. It represents a dramatic step forward in the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

#### **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity:**

- It is an international treaty governing the movements of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology from one country to another.

#### **Nagoya Protocol:**

- It aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way.

#### **Aichi Biodiversity Targets:**

- Adopted at COP10, and advocates realization of a society in harmony with nature as a shared vision until 2050.

### **3 International Solar Alliance (ISA)**

**Context:** According to the year-end review of the government's policies, the establishment of the International Solar Alliance by India ranked amongst its biggest successes as it is the first multilateral organisation with as many as 71 member countries already signed on that is headquartered in India.

#### **• What is the International Solar Alliance?**

- ▶ Launched in 2015, ISA is a coalition of solar resource-rich **countries lying fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn** to specifically address energy needs by harnessing solar energy.
- ▶ It is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization.
- ▶ The ISA Framework Agreement has a total of 14 articles. **There are no targets or legal obligations imposed on member-countries.**
- ▶ UN member countries that are located beyond the Tropics can join the ISA as "Partner Countries." United Nations including its organs can join the ISA as "Strategic Partners".

- ▶ Organizations that have the potential to help the ISA achieve its objectives including regional intergovernmental economic integration organizations constituted by sovereign states at least one of which is a member of the ISA can join the ISA as a “Partner Organization”.
- **What is the Paris Declaration on ISA?**
  - ▶ The Paris Declaration was issued on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at the time of launching of International Solar Alliance. It inter alia states that the prospective member countries share the collective ambition to undertake innovative and concerted efforts for reducing the cost of finance and the cost of technology for immediate deployment of competitive solar generation.
  - ▶ It further aims to formulate financial instruments to effectively mobilize more than US\$1000 billion dollars in investments that will be required by 2030 for the massive deployment of affordable solar energy and pave the way for future solar generation, storage and good technologies for each prospective member country’s individual needs.
- **Where is the seat of the ISA?**
  - ▶ India and France jointly laid the foundation stone of ISA Headquarters and inaugurated the interim Secretariat of the ISA at the **National Institute of Solar Energy campus, Gurugram, Haryana.**
- **What are the initiatives ISA has undertaken so far?**
  - ▶ As an action-oriented organization three programmes of ISA namely “Scaling up solar applications for agricultural use”, “Affordable finance at scale” and “Scaling up Solar Minigrids” have been launched. Drafts of the fourth and the fifth programmes are proposed to be launched in the near future.
  - ▶ The ISA signed and issued Joint Declarations with World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Climate Parliament, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for the promotion and cooperation of solar energy.

## 4 New Agri Project- “Green Ag.”

**Context:** The government launched a Global Environment Facility (GEF) assisted project namely, “Green Ag.” in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) during September, 2018.

### About:

- ‘Green Ag.’ will help in transforming Indian Agriculture for global environmental benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes.
- The aim of the project is to mainstream biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture.
- It will also support harmonization between India’s agricultural and environmental sector priorities and investments so that the achievement of national and global environmental benefits can be fully realized without compromising India’s ability to strengthen rural livelihoods and meet its food and nutrition security.
- It started in high-conservation-value landscapes of five States including- Madhya Pradesh: Chambal Landscape, Mizoram: Dampa Landscape, Odisha: Similipal Landscape, Rajasthan: Desert National Park Landscape and Uttarakhand: Corbett.
- Key missions that will be targeted for strengthening include the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture; National Livestock Mission; National Food Security Mission; National Initiative on Climate-resilient Agriculture, National Mission for Horticulture and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.

### Global Environment Facility

- It was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems.
- It provides funding to assist developing countries in meeting the objectives of international environmental conventions.
- It serves as "financial mechanism" to five conventions, which are Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and Minamata Convention on Mercury.
- Today, it is an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector that addresses global environmental issues.
- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):** It is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

## 5 National Clean Air Programme

### Context:

- The Centre has launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) to reduce particulate matter (PM) pollution by 20-30% in at least 102 cities by 2024.
- It will provide the States and the Centre with a framework to combat air pollution.

### • What is NCAP?

- ▶ It is a pollution control initiative launched by the Ministry of Environment to cut the concentration of coarse (particulate matter of diameter 10 micrometer or less, or PM10) and fine particles (particulate matter of diameter 2.5 micrometer or less, or PM2.5) by at least 20% in the next five years, with 2017 as the base year for comparison.

### • Which cities will fall under this?

- ▶ Following reports of WHO and the air quality data obtained, 102 cities from 23 States and UTs have been chosen as non-attainment cities. With the exception of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Bengaluru, most of those chosen are tier two cities.

## 6 Air Quality Index

- The AQI is an index for reporting daily air quality.
- It tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you.
- The AQI focuses on health effects you may experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air.
- **AQI is calculated for eight major air pollutants: Ground-level ozone, PM10, PM2.5, Carbon monoxide, Sulphur dioxide, Nitrogen dioxide, Ammonia, Lead.**
- There are six AQI categories, namely Good + Satisfactory, Moderately polluted, Poor, Very Poor, and Severe.

## 7 SAFAR

- The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) **is an initiative introduced by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**
- The system is indigenously developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune and is operationalized by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- The giant true colour LED display gives out real-time air quality index on a 24x7 basis with colour coding along with a 72-hour advance forecast.
- The system will be an integral part of India's first Air Quality Early Warning System operational in Delhi.
- SAFAR will accelerate public awareness and preparedness of air pollution and weather extremes.
- It will also lead to a better understanding of linkages among emissions, weather, pollution, and climate. It will monitor all weather parameters like temperature, rainfall, humidity, and wind speed and wind direction.
- **In addition to regular air quality parameters like PM2.5, PM10, Sulphur Dioxide, Ozone, Nitrogen Oxides, Carbon Monoxide, the system will also monitor the existence of Benzene, Toluene and Xylene.**
- SAFAR system would benefit cost savings to several other sectors like agriculture, aviation, infrastructure, disaster management skill, tourism, and many others, which directly or indirectly get affected by air quality and weather.

## 8 Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme

**Context:** A two-day Workshop on the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (SGP) was held recently in New Delhi.

### About:

- UNDP has been supporting the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in implementing the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and financed the Small Grants Programme (SGP) in India since 1997.
- Projects under the SGP are implemented through a National Host Institution – Centre for Environment Education (CEE), and other NGO partners and stakeholders that has a presence in different parts of the country.
- **What is GEF-Small Grants Programme?**
  - ▶ It was launched in 1992 with 33 participating countries and has expanded to assist 125 countries currently.
  - ▶ It provides financial and technical support to communities and Civil Society Organizations to meet the overall objective of global environmental benefits secured through community-based initiatives and actions.
  - ▶ The SGP believes that community-driven and civil society-led initiatives can generate environmental benefits while supporting sustainable livelihoods, gender equality, and civil society empowerment.
  - ▶ The Program is specifically designed to mobilize bottom-up actions by empowering local civil society organizations, and poor and vulnerable communities, including women and Indigenous Peoples.
  - ▶ **It is currently implemented by UNDP on behalf of the GEF partnership.**



## Key achievements of SGP in India

- SGP has been operational for over 25 years and is being implemented throughout India.
- In India, SGP has been working extensively in the areas of biodiversity conservation, climate change, and land degradation.
- 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
- 85,000 MTs of CO2 emissions reduced through a range of alternative energy and energy-efficient technologies such as efficient cookstoves, solar driers, and briquetting units, plastic wasters recycling units, micro-hydro, and biomass.
- Promotion of sustainable income generation activities among the small farm holders.

## 9 Green Credit Scheme

**Context:** The Forest Advisory Committee has approved the 'Green Credit Scheme' that could allow "forests" to be traded as a commodity. If implemented, it allows the Forest Department to outsource one of its responsibilities of reforestation to non-government agencies.

### What is the 'Green Credit Scheme'?

- The proposed 'Green Credit Scheme', as it is called, allows agencies, they could be private companies, village forest communities, to identify land and begin growing plantations.
- After three years, they would be eligible to be considered as compensatory forest land if they met the Forest Department's criteria.
- An industry needing forest land could then approach the agency and pay it for parcels of such forested land, and this would then be transferred to the Forest Department and be recorded as forest land.
- The participating agency will be free to trade its asset, which is a plantation, in parcels, with project proponents who need forest land.
- Once finalised, the scheme will overhaul the compensatory afforestation process by accrediting private or public-private partnership companies to raise plantations near reserved forests which can be bought in lieu of projects involving forest diversion.
- If the company raising the plantation doesn't wish to trade it, it can retain it and harvest the timber once ready.

## 10 India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative

**Context:** The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change signed a letter of Intent establishing the India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative together with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### About:

- In January 2019, the Indian and Norwegian governments agreed to work more closely on oceans by signing an MoU and establishing the India-Norway Ocean Dialogue during the Norwegian Prime Minister's visit to India in January.

- A joint Task Force on Blue Economy with government officials, researchers, and experts, as well as the private sector, was established to develop sustainable solutions within strategic areas of the blue economy, such as maritime and marine sector in addition to the energy sector.

### Highlights of the Initiative

- In partnership, Norway and India will share experiences and competence, and collaborate on efforts to develop clean and healthy oceans, sustainable use of ocean resources and growth in the blue economy.
- Both the governments launched the first Joint initiative under this new partnership. The India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative will combat marine pollution, which is one of the fastest-growing environmental concerns.
- Through a range of implementing partners, this initiative will seek to support local governments in implementing sustainable waste management practices
- It will help in developing systems for collecting and analyzing information About: sources and scope of marine pollution and improve private sector investment.
- Support will also be directed towards beach clean-up efforts, awareness raising campaigns and pilot project using plastic waste as fuel substitution for coal in cement production and developing frameworks for deposit schemes.

### Other Initiatives for Marine Pollution

#### Clean Seas Campaign

- **UN Environment launched Clean Seas (#CleanSeas on social media)** in February 2017, with the aim of engaging governments, the general public and the private sector in the fight against marine plastic pollution.
- India joined 'Clean Seas Campaign' on World Environment Day 2018.

#### Beat Plastic Pollution

- **"Beat Plastic Pollution", the theme for World Environment Day 2018**, is a call to action for all of us to come together to combat one of the great environmental challenges of our time.
- Every year, up to 13 million tons of plastic leak into our oceans, where it smothers coral reefs and threatens vulnerable marine wildlife.
- The plastic that ends up in the oceans can circle the Earth four times in a single year, and it can persist for up to 1,000 years before it fully disintegrates.
- **India aims at banning single use plastics by 2022.**

#### National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)

- It has a vision and mission to aid in the better protection, conservation, rehabilitation, management and policy design of the coast.
- Recently, India emerged as a world leader with beach clean-up projects across the country.

#### Consortium for the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

- It (WIO-C, "the Consortium") comprises a group of international and regional NGOs in partnership with intergovernmental organizations that have presence and are active in regional marine and coastal ecosystem management in the Western Indian Ocean.

## 11 Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO) initiative

### Context:

- The Indian Institute of Petroleum has successfully finished a pilot test to convert used-cooking oil into bio-aviation turbine fuel (Bio-ATF), which can be blended with conventional ATF and used as aircraft fuel.
- The test assumes importance as the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched the Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO) initiative to collect and convert used-cooking oil into bio-fuel.

### About:

- The Institute collected used cooking oil from caterers and hotels in Dehradun for the pilot, which has now set the platform for commercial use of the technology.
- The chemical composition of the used cooking oil is identical to other plant-based oils that have been converted to Bio-ATF.

### Repurpose Used Cooking Oil

- **The FSSAI launched RUCO – Repurpose Used Cooking Oil on Biofuel Day 2018.** RUCO is an ecosystem that will enable the collection and conversion of used cooking oil to biodiesel
- India is one of the largest consumers of vegetable oil and so has the potential to recover almost 220 crorelitre of Used Cooking Oil (UCO) for the production of biodiesel by the year 2022.
- FSSAI has launched a micro-site to monitor the progress of the collection and conversion of UCO to biodiesel. Sixty-Four companies have been identified thus far at 101 locations across the country to enable the collection of UCO.
- McDonald's is already converting its used cooking oil to biodiesel from 100 outlets in Mumbai and Pune as of today.
- Bangalore based **ECO Green Fuels** is also currently converting approximately 1200 tonnes of UCO to biodiesel annually.
- The regulator is implementing an Education, Enforcement, and Ecosystem (EEE) strategy to divert UCO from the food value chain and curb current illegal practices.

## 12 Super-Efficient Air Conditioning Programme

### Context:

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of four National Public Sector Enterprises **under the Ministry of Power**, Government of India launched its **Super-Efficient Air Conditioning Programme** for residential and institutional consumers in the BSES area.
- These Super-Efficient Air Conditioners are 40 percent more efficient than but priced comparably with, the 3-star ACs currently available in the market.

### • Benefits

- ▶ Besides promoting energy efficiency, the Super-Efficient AC programme will also help to reduce the peak power demand in South and West Delhi by 22MW, enabling the two organisations to harness synergies to promote energy security and sustainability.
- ▶ The programme directly addresses the prospect of the nearly four-fold increase in energy consumption from buildings and cooling appliances in India by 2032.

- ▶ It will also address the goals of India's Cooling Action Plan and Hydrochlorofluorocarbons **Phase-Out Management Plan**, enabling achievement of India's targets under the Kigali and Paris Agreements.
- **Programme**
  - ▶ EESL and BSES have joined hands to implement a 12-month pilot of the programme by exchanging an agreement.
  - ▶ BSES Rajdhani Power Limited would assist in aggregating demand and providing local marketing and outreach support to promote energy-efficient technologies in the areas it currently services, thereby covering over 25 lakh residential and institutional consumers in South and West Delhi.
  - ▶ EESL will conduct all activities related to the source, supply, complaint management and redressal, and fulfillment of warranty obligations for the products.
  - ▶ Applying its proven business model of demand aggregation, EESL will mobilize the capital of INR 150 crores for the programme while redeeming its investment through upfront payments for the super-efficient ACs from customers.
  - ▶ EESL has initiated the procurement process of super-efficient ACs, thereby capitalising on opportunities for leveraging economies of scale through demand aggregation, and so reducing the cost of this superior green technology to consumers. Based on its past experiences with bulk procurement for other technologies and programmes, EESL expects to discover prices that are 20-30 percent less than the retail costs of similar technologies currently available in the market.
- **International Finance**
  - ▶ EESL's investment in the programme is partially supported by a grant from the Global Environment Facility.
  - ▶ Further, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is providing necessary grant support and loan while United Nations Environment (UNEP) is providing technical assistance support to the Super-Efficient AC programme.

## 13 Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana

**Context:** Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the "Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan- Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivaran) Yojana" for providing financial support to Integrated Bioethanol Projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock.

### About:

- "Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana" is being launched as a **tool to create 2G Ethanol capacity in the country and attract investments in this new sector.**
- It will be supported with a total financial outlay of Rs.1969.50 crore for the period from 2018-19 to 2023-24. Under this Yojana, 12 commercial scales and 10 demonstration-scale second generation (2g) ethanol projects will be provided a Viability Gap Funding (VGF) support in two phases.
- The scheme focuses to incentivize 2G Ethanol sector and support this nascent industry by creating a suitable ecosystem for setting up commercial projects and increasing 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 the EBP Programme.

- Centre for High Technology (CHT), a technical body under the aegis of MoP&NG, will be the implementation agency for the scheme.

## 14 SATAT Initiative

**Context:** Petroleum Ministry has launched the SATAT initiative to promote Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) as an alternative, green transport fuel on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

### About:

- Launched in collaboration with PSU Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), it paves way for setting up Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants by independent entrepreneurs.
- The Working Group on Biofuels, set up under the National Policy on Biofuels 2018, is in the process of finalising a pan-India pricing model for Compressed Bio-Gas.
- The initiative is aimed at providing a **Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation**.

### • Steps taken by the government to promote this initiative:

- ▶ Government is keen to set up 5000 CBG plants in the next 5 years, and for this purpose, production offtake guarantee is being given for such plants.
- ▶ There will be no restriction on the technology choice and the Government is incurring Rs 75,000 crore capital expenditure for setting up infrastructure for the city gas distribution network.
- ▶ The entrepreneurs would be able to separately market for other by-products from these plants, including bio-manure, carbon-dioxide, etc., to enhance returns on investment.

### • Other Initiatives linked to CBG are:

- ▶ The National Policy on Biofuels 2018 emphasizes the active promotion of advanced bio-fuels, including CBG.
- ▶ The Government of India had launched the **GOBAR-DHAN** (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources) scheme earlier this year to convert cattle dung and solid waste in farms to CBG and compost.
- ▶ The scheme proposes to cover 700 projects across the country in 2018-19.
- ▶ The programme will be funded under the Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) component of Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin(SBM-G) to benefit households in identified villages through Gram Panchayats.
- ▶ The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has notified Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of Rs. 4 crores per 4,800 kg of CBG per day generated from 12,000 cubic metres of biogas per day, with a maximum of Rs.10 crore per project.

### Bio-gas

- Biogas is produced naturally through a process of anaerobic decomposition from waste / bio-mass sources like agriculture residue, cattle dung, sugarcane press mud, municipal solid waste, sewage treatment plant waste, etc.
- After purification, Bio-Gas is compressed and called CBG, which has a pure methane content of over 95%.

### Compressed Bio-Gas

- Compressed Bio-Gas is exactly similar to the commercially available natural gas in its composition and energy potential.
- With calorific value (~52,000 KJ/kg) and other properties similar to CNG, Compressed Bio-Gas can be used as an alternative, renewable automotive fuel.
- Given the abundance of biomass in the country, Compressed Bio-Gas has the potential to replace CNG in automotive, industrial and commercial uses in the coming years.
- Compressed Bio-Gas can be produced from various bio-mass/waste sources, including agricultural residue, municipal solid waste, sugarcane press mud, distillery spent wash, cattle dung, and sewage treatment plant waste. The other waste streams, i.e, rotten potatoes from cold storages, rotten vegetables, dairy plants, chicken/poultry litter, food waste, horticulture waste, forestry residues and treated organic waste from industrial effluent treatment plants (ETPs), etc.

## 15 India Cooling Action Programme

**Context:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) recently in New Delhi.

- ICAP provides an integrated vision towards cooling across sectors encompassing inter alia reduction of cooling demand, refrigerant transition, enhancing energy efficiency and better technology options with a 20-year time horizon.

**About:**

**The India Cooling Action seeks to:**

- **Reduce cooling demand across sectors by 20% to 25% by 2037-38.**
- **Reduce refrigerant demand by 25% to 30% by 2037-38.**
- **Reduce cooling energy requirements by 25% to 40% by 2037-38.**
- Recognize “cooling and related areas” as a thrust area of research under the national S&T Programme.
- Training and certification of 100,000 servicing sector technicians by 2022-23, synergizing with Skill India Mission. These actions will have significant climate benefits.

## 16 Bharat Stage IV (BS-IV) cars

**Context:** Methanol-15 (M-15) fuel will be used in BS-IV to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

**About:**

- This is according to the mass emission standards for flex-fuel M15 or M100 and MD 95 vehicles notified last year.
- The use of blended fuel M-15 in BS-IV cars can result in the lowering of greenhouse gas emissions by About: 5 to 10 %, thereby improving air quality.
- **M-15 fuel**
  - ▶ **It is a blend of 15 % methanol and 85 % Gasoline.**

- ▶ It is a clean-burning drop in fuel which can replace both petrol & diesel in transportation & LPG, Wood, Kerosene in cooking fuel.
  - ▶ It can also replace diesel in Railways, Marine Sector, Power Generation and this could be the ideal complement to Hybrid and Electric Mobility.
  - ▶ **Methanol Economy is the 'Bridge' to the dream of a complete "Hydrogen based fuel systems"**.
  - ▶ **M-15 in petrol and diesel will reduce pollution by 33% and 80 % respectively.**
  - ▶ It burns efficiently in all internal combustion engines, produces no particulate matter, no soot, almost nil SOX and NOX emissions (Near Zero Pollution).
- **Bharat stage emission standards**
    - ▶ These emission standards were set by the central government to keep a check on the pollutant levels emitted by vehicles that use combustion engines.
    - ▶ The norms were introduced in 2000. With appropriate fuel and technology, they limit the release of **air pollutants** such as nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, particulate matter (PM) and sulphur oxides from vehicles
    - ▶ These norms are based on European emission norms which, for example, are referred to similarly as 'Euro 4' and 'Euro 6'. These norms are followed largely by all automakers across the globe and act as a good reference point as to how much does a vehicle pollute.
    - ▶ To bring them into force, the **Central Pollution Control Board** sets timelines and standards which have to be followed by automakers.
    - ▶ The higher the number gets, the stricter the Bharat Stage emission norms get which eventually means it becomes trickier (and costlier) for automakers to meet them.
    - ▶ Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) norms are two stages ahead of the present BS-IV norms in regulating emissions. BS-VI norm would come into force from April 1, 2020, in India.
  - **Difference between BS-VI and BS-IV**
    - ▶ The major difference is the presence of sulphur in the fuel. While the BS-IV fuels contain 50 parts per million (ppm) sulphur, the BS-VI grade fuel only has 10 ppm sulphur content.

## 17 Global Carbon Project Report

**Context:** According to the Global Carbon Project report, global carbon emissions are an all-time high of 37.1 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2018. India, the third-highest contributor, saw emissions rise by About: 6.3% from 2017 in 2018.

### Global Carbon Project Report Highlights

- Global carbon dioxide emissions rose 1.6% in 2017, and new data indicates emissions could have risen more than 2% in 2018 on the back of sustained increases in coal, oil, and gas use.
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have now risen for a second year, after three years of little to no growth from 2014 to 2016. The rise in 2017 was 1.6%.
- The 10 biggest emitters in 2018 are China, the U.S., India, Russia, Japan, Germany, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Canada. The EU as a region of countries ranks third.
- China's emissions accounted for 27% of the global total, having grown an estimated 4.7% in 2018 and reaching a new all-time high.
- Emissions in the U.S., which has withdrawn from its commitment to the Paris Agreement, account

for 15% of the global total and look set to have grown About: 2.5% in 2018 after several years of decline.

- Despite the rapid deployment in low carbon technologies in India, emissions are expected to grow a solid 6.3% in 2018, pushed by the strong economic growth of around 8% per year. Coal is still the mainstay of the Indian economy, and it will be a challenge for solar and wind to displace coal given the strong growth in energy use.
- Limiting global warming to the 2015 Paris Agreement goal of keeping the global temperature increase this century to well below 2°C would need carbon dioxide emissions to decline by 50% by 2030 and reach net zero by About: 2050.
- Also the IPCC Special Report reveals that at the current rate of emissions, the world is set to breach the global warming limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius goal set in Paris Agreement between 2030 and 2052. At present, the world is 1.2°C warmer compared to pre-industrial levels

## 18 Certification Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

**Context:** India's first forest-certification scheme gets global recognition as Geneva-based non-profit recently decided to endorse the Certification Standard for Sustainable Forest Management designed for Indian forests.

### More on news:

- The council of **Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), a Geneva-based non-profit**, has decided to endorse the **Certification Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) developed by Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF), an Indian non-profit organisation.**

### Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)

- It is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) through independent third-party certification.
- As an umbrella organization, it works by **endorsing national forest certification systems** developed through multi-stakeholder processes and tailored to local priorities and conditions.
- It is the world's largest forest certification system.
- India is the National Governing Body Member of PEFC.

### Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF)

- It is a non-profit organisation, registered as a Society, to have a globally aligned certification program developed within India. It came into existence in January 2015.
- NCCF is working towards developing national sustainability certification standards in diverse areas of natural resource management, majorly forestry, trees outside forests, protected areas, and wetlands.
- It also includes non-wood forest products, quality planting material, ecotourism, biofuels, sustainable mining and water quality, etc.
- Policy advocacy and diverse conservation activities are other areas of focus.
- It has got support from the key forest-based stakeholders such as the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.



**Forest Management Certification:**

- Forest certification is a global movement initiated in 1990s after Rio Earth Summit.
- It is a **market-based non-regulatory conservation** tool designed to promote sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests by an independent third party.
- As several developed countries have put trade restrictions on import of non-certified timber, non-timber forest products and wood-based goods into their countries, getting sustainable forest management certificates has become mandatory for exports.
- There are currently two mainstream operational Forest Management Certification schemes available on a global level; **FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) launched in 1993, PEFC (Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification) founded in 1999.**

**19 National Green Corps 'Eco Club' Programme**

**Context:** Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) organized an annual meeting of state nodal agencies implementing the 'Ecoclub' programme for the first time.

**More on News:**

- **National Green Corps** is a programme started in 2001-02 by the Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change.
- **Aim:** To provide opportunities for children to understand the environment and environmental problems through school eco-clubs.
- The programme is a subpart of **Environment Education Awareness and Training (EEAT).**

**Implementation:**

- The scheme is being operated through Eco-clubs of 50-60 students having an interest in environment-related issues, formed in member schools.
- **Eco clubs are supervised by a Teacher In-charge** who is selected from among the teachers of the member schools based on his/her interest in environment-related issues.
- There is **District Implementation and Monitoring Committee** to supervise, organise training for In-charge teachers and monitor periodically the implementation of the scheme at the District level.
- There is a **State Steering Committee** for guidance, direction and to oversee the implementation of the scheme.
- The **State Nodal Agency** coordinates the implementation of the scheme in the State and organize related activities like training to Master Trainers.
- The **National Steering Committee** will give overall direction to the programme and ensure linkages at all levels.

### Environment Education Awareness and Training (EEAT)

- It is a central sector scheme of the Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change continuing since 1983-84.
- The basic objective to promote environmental awareness among all sections of the society and to mobilize people's participation for conservation of environment.
- The objectives of the scheme are achieved through the implementation of four programmes namely National Green Corps, National Environment Awareness Campaign, Seminars/Workshops and National Nature Camping Programme.

**20**

### National Mission of Clean Ganga (NMCG)

**Context::** The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) under its 'NamamiGange' program has taken up an initiative to conserve the wetlands in Ganga River Basin.

#### More on News:

- The difference in the NamamiGange Project is primarily to rejuvenate the river through increasing the base flow and aquifers recharge and conservation of wetlands because that forms the part of one of our 'AviralDhara' which is to maintain the environmental flow in the river.
- So, in a first step the programme is aimed at conserving wetlands in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.
- The NMCG in collaboration with the State Wetland Authorities will help in identifying and preparing Integrated Management Plans for management and conservation in the Ganga basin.
- The program is also aimed at involving the community in the wetland conservation process through the Wildlife Institute of India. Apart from the government's efforts, NMCG has also appointed a team to educate the people in contributing to the rejuvenation of these water bodies.
- Ecosystem-based and community-led models of rejuvenation of wetlands for enhancing 'Aviralta' and 'Nirmalta' of the river and water conservation in the Ganga basin are being integrated into the NamamiGangeProgramme.

**21**

### Jalyukta Shivar

**Context:** Maharashtra government has scrapped the Jalyukta Shivar- the flagship water conservation project.

#### More on News:

- Launched in December 2014 after Maharashtra experienced consecutive droughts.
- Aimed at rolling out measures that could potentially mitigate water scarcity in the most drought-prone villages in a systematic manner.
- The project targeted strengthening and streamlining existing water resources like canals, bunds, and ponds by arresting maximum run-off rainwater during monsoon.

## 22 Forest-PLUS 2.0

**Context:** US Agency for International Development (USAID) and India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has launched Forest-PLUS 2.0.

### More on News:

- It is a five-year programme initiated in December 2018 that focuses on developing tools and techniques to bolster ecosystem management and harnessing ecosystem services in forest landscape management.
- It comprises a pilot project in three landscapes — Gaya in Bihar, Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala and Medak in Telangana. The choice of these sites was driven by the contrast in their landscapes – Bihar is a forest deficit area, Telangana is a relatively drier area where there is ample scope for community livelihood enhancement and Kerala is rich in biodiversity.
- The targets of this set are:
  - ▶ 1,20,000 hectares of land under improved management.
  - ▶ New, inclusive economic activity worth \$12 million.
  - ▶ Measurable benefits accrued to 800,000 households.
  - ▶ Three incentive mechanisms demonstrated in managing landscapes for ecosystem services.

## 23

## Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) Himalayan programme

**Context:** The Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) programme being carried out in the Himalayan states jointly by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has been extended till July 2020.

### More on News:

- ICFRE-ICIMOD's REDD+ programme was launched in January 2016 to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in India's Himalayan states.
- The REDD+ programme was initiated by the United Nations in 2005 to mitigate climate change through enhanced forest management in developing countries. It aimed to create incentives for communities so that they stop forest degrading practices.
- The mechanism has been enshrined in the Paris Agreement of 2015, and its implementation is transitioning from smaller, isolated projects to larger, jurisdictional programmes with support from bilateral and multilateral agencies.

### REDD+

- It is a mechanism developed by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- It creates a financial value for the carbon stored in forests by offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development.
- Developing countries would receive results-based payments for results-based actions.

- REDD+ goes beyond simply deforestation and forest degradation and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

## 24 Swachh-Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan

**Context:** The Environment Ministry is undertaking a mass cleanliness-cum-awareness drive in 50 identified beaches under Swachh-Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan.

### More on News:

- It has been launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
- The programme aims at making beaches clean and also aims to create awareness amongst citizens About: the importance of coastal ecosystems (in Beaches across 10 states / UTs).
- Environment Education Division and Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) under the Environment Ministry will be responsible for its implementation.
- Finally, the best three beaches will be awarded along with a certificate of appreciation.

## 25 Alliance to End Plastic Waste

**Context:** An alliance of global companies from the plastics and consumer goods value chain has launched a new organisation- Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW) - to advance solutions to eliminate plastic waste, especially in the ocean.

### Alliance to End Plastic Waste

- It is a not-for-profit organization that includes companies that make, use, sell, process, collect, and recycle plastics. This includes chemical and plastic manufacturers, consumer goods companies, retailers, converters, and waste management companies, also known as the plastics value chain.
- The cross value chain AEPW, currently made up of nearly thirty member companies, has committed over \$1.0 billion intending to invest \$1.5 billion over the next five years to help end plastic waste in the environment.
- It will develop and bring to scale solutions that will minimize and manage plastic waste and promote solutions for used plastics by helping to enable a circular economy.
- The membership of alliance represents global companies and located throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.
- The Alliance has been working with the **World Business Council for Sustainable Development** as a founding strategic partner.

## 26 Miyawaki Method of Afforestation

**Context:** The Miyawaki method of afforestation is to come upon the government office premises, residential complexes, school premises, and puramboke land in Kerala.

**More on News:**

- The Miyawaki method, developed by a Japanese botanist after whom it is named, involves planting saplings in small areas, causing them to “fight” for resources and grow nearly 10 times quicker.
- It originated in Japan and is now increasingly adopted in other parts of the world, including our Chennai.
- **It has revolutionised the concept of urban afforestation by turning backyards into mini-forests**

## 27 Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)s

**Context:** Cabinet approves “FMBAP” for Flood Management Works in the entire country and River Management Activities and works related to Border Areas during 2017-18 to 2019-20.

**More on news:**

- The Scheme “FMBAP” has been framed by merging the components of two continuing XII Plan schemes titled “Flood Management Programme (FMP)” and “River Management Activities and Works related to Border Areas (RMBA)”.
- The Scheme aims to assist the State Governments to provide a reasonable degree of protection against floods in critical areas by adopting an optimum combination of structural and non-structural measures and enhancing capabilities of State/Central Government officials in related fields.
- The works under the scheme will protect valuable land from erosion and flooding and help in maintaining peace along the border.
- The Scheme aims at completion of the on-going projects already approved under FMP. Further, the scheme also caters to Hydro-meteorological observations and Flood Forecasting on common rivers with the neighbouring countries.
- The Scheme also includes surveys and investigations, preparation of DPR, etc. of water resources projects on the common rivers with neighbouring countries like Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, Sapta Kosi-Sun Kosi Projects in Nepal which would benefit both countries.
- The funding pattern for FM Component for works in general category States will continue to be 50% (Centre): 50% (State) and for projects of North Eastern States, Sikkim, J&K, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, the funding pattern will continue to be 70% (Centre): 30% (State).

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