

**NATIONAL****Capacity Building Programme for Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) of Panchayati Raj Institutions.**

The Government of India has initiated the Capacity Building Programme for Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

**Objective of the Programme**

- To empower EWRs by developing leadership capacities so that they serve as catalysts for social change and function as peer facilitators in the field, become vocal for their rights and participate effectively in the governance processes.
- It is a significant endeavour in creating a forum for EWRs to understand their roles and responsibilities in a more prolific manner.
- Although it is the first step towards harnessing the full potential of EWRs, but this is envisioned as a continuous process in order to instil confidence, courage, conviction, motivation and above all providing hand-holding support to EWRs for mainstreaming them in the governance process.

**State Governments' Contribution:**

- State Governments have been actively involved in imparting these trainings. Mainly, State Institute of Rural Developments (SIRDs) and State Resource Centers (SRCs) are actively collaborating with Ministry of Women and Child Development in conducting training programmes across the States.
- This involves collaborating with institutions of the Departments of Panchayati Raj, Agriculture, Women & Child Development, Rural Development, etc.

**Background:**

- The project is being implemented by National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), an autonomous body functioning under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
- Ministry of Women & Child Development has also developed training modules regarding laws for protection of women and children, development schemes and programmes (State and Center), Information Communication Technology (ICT) for the EWRs, participatory planning and asset creation, monitoring of Public Works and leadership qualities.
- This approach to build capacities of these grassroots leaders has been envisaged to yield more desired development outcomes.

**Union Cabinet approves the National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCIM) Bill, 2018**

The Union Cabinet has approved the National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCIM) Bill, 2018. The bill seeks to replace the existing regulator, the Central Council for Indian Medicine (CCIM).

**Features of the Bill**

- The bill provides for the constitution of a National Commission with four autonomous boards.
- The Board of Ayurveda would be responsible for overseeing the overall education of Ayurveda.
- The Board of Unani, Siddha and Sowaigpa will be responsible for overseeing the overall education of Unani, Siddha and Sowaigpa.
- The bill provides for two common boards, Board of Assessment and Rating and Board of Ethics and Registration.
- The Board of Assessment and Rating would be responsible to assess and grant permission to educational institutions of Indian systems of Medicine.
- The Board of Ethics and Registration of practitioners of Indian systems of medicine would maintain National Register and deal with ethical issues relating to practice under the National Commission for Indian Medicine,
- The bill also proposes a common entrance exam and an exit exam which all graduates will have to clear to get practicing licenses.
- The bill proposes a teacher's eligibility test to assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions.

The bill aims at bringing reforms in the medical education of Indian systems in line with the National Medical Commission proposed for setting up for allopathy system of medicine. The National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine aims to promote transparency and accountability.

## **INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL**

### **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**

Clarifying about a recent U.S. media report that alleged that China had hatched a secret plan to build fighter jets and other military hardware in Pakistan as part of the CPEC project, Pakistan has said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a bilateral economic project and has no military dimensions.

#### **CPEC:**

- The CPEC is the flagship project of the multi-billion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a pet project of Chinese President Xi Jinping, aimed at enhancing Beijing's influence around the world through China-funded infrastructure projects.
- The 3,000 km-long China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) consisting of highways, railways, and pipelines is the latest irritant in the India-China relationship.
- CPEC eventually aims at linking the city of Gwadar in South Western Pakistan to China's North Western region Xinjiang through a vast network of highways and railways.
- The proposed project will be financed by heavily-subsidised loans, that will be disbursed to the Government of Pakistan by Chinese banking giants such as Exim Bank of China, China Development Bank, and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.

#### **India's Concern:**

- It passes through PoK. Any Indian participation would inextricably be linked to the country's legitimate claims on PoK.
- CPEC rests on a Chinese plan to secure and shorten its supply lines through Gwadar with an enhanced presence in the Indian Ocean. Hence, it is widely believed that upon CPEC's fruition, an extensive Chinese presence will undermine India's influence in the Indian Ocean.
- It is also being contended that if CPEC were to successfully transform the Pakistan economy that could be a "red rag" for India which will remain at the receiving end of a wealthier and stronger Pakistan.
- Besides, India shares a great deal of trust deficit with China and Pakistan and has a history of conflict with both. As a result, even though suggestions to re-approach the project pragmatically have been made, no advocate has overruled the principle strands of contention that continue to mar India's equations with China and Pakistan.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS)**

China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS), touted as a rival to the widely-used American GPS, has started providing global services. The positioning accuracy of the system has reached 10 metres globally and five metres in the Asia-Pacific region. Its velocity accuracy is 0.2 metres per second, while its timing accuracy stands at 20 nanoseconds.

Pakistan has become the first country to use the BeiDou system ending its reliance on the Global Positioning System (GPS).

#### **Significance:**

It will be the fourth global satellite navigation system after the US GPS, Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo.

#### **BeiDou Satellite System:**

- Named after the Chinese term for Big Dipper, the BeiDou system started providing independent services over China in 2000. It is being projected by Beijing as a rival to the American Global Positioning System (GPS).
- The full constellation is scheduled to comprise 35 satellites.
- BeiDou has two separate constellations, BeiDou-1 and BeiDou-2. BeiDou-1 also known as first generation was a constellation of three satellites.

- BeiDou-2, also known as COMPASS, is the second generation of the system. It became operational in the year 2011.

Various GNSS systems: The four global GNSS systems are – GPS (US), GLONASS (Russia), Galileo (EU), BeiDou (China). Additionally, there are two regional systems – QZSS (Japan) and IRNSS or NavIC (India).

### **Cabinet approves Indian Human Spaceflight Initiative: Gaganyaan Programme**

The Union Cabinet has approved the Gaganyaan Programme with demonstration of Indian Human Spaceflight Initiative.

#### **Indian Human Spaceflight Initiative**

- This will demonstrate capability of the mission to low earth orbit for a mission duration ranging from one orbital period to a maximum of seven days.
- A human rated GSLV Mk-III will be used to carry the orbital module which will have necessary provisions for sustaining a 3-member crew for the duration of the mission.
- Two unmanned flights and one manned flight will be undertaken as part of Gaganyaan Programme.
- The necessary infrastructure for crew training, realization of flight systems and ground infrastructure will be established to support the Gaganyaan Programme.
- ISRO will collaborate extensively with National agencies, laboratories, academia and industry to accomplish the Gaganyaan Programme objectives.

#### **Implementation Strategy and Targets**

- Gaganyaan Programme will be a national effort in collaboration with Industry, Academia and other scientific agencies and laboratories as stake holders along with ISRO.
- ISRO will be responsible for realizing the flight hardware through Industry.
- National agencies, laboratories and Academia will participate in crew training, human life science technology development initiatives as well as design reviews.
- First human space flight demonstration is targeted to be completed within 40 months from the date of sanction.
- Prior to this, two unmanned flights in full complement will be carried out to gain confidence on the technology and mission management aspects.

#### **Expected Outcomes**

- The programme is expected to spur research and development within the country in niche science and technology domains.
- Huge potential for technology spinoffs in areas such as medicine, agriculture, industrial safety, pollution, waste management, water and food resource management etc.
- Human spaceflight programme will provide a unique micro-gravity platform in space for conducting experiments and test bed for future technologies.
- The programme is expected to give impetus to economic activities within the country in terms of employment generation, human resource development and enhanced industrial capabilities.
- Human Spaceflight capability will enable India to participate as a collaborating partner in future Global space exploration initiatives with long term national benefits.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **India's second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to UNFCCC**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved Submission of India's second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) towards the fulfilment of the reporting obligation under the Convention.

The second biennial update report aims to provide an update to India's first biennial report to the United Nation's body on climate change. The report contains five major components including national circumstances, national greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation actions, finance, technology and capacity building needs and support received and domestic monitoring, reporting and verification arrangements.

#### **INDC- India's proposed targets:**

- Reduce emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35% by 2030 from 2005 level.

- Achieve about 40% electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030 with help of transfer of technology and low cost international finance.
- Create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

#### UNFCCC:

- The UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, which marked the beginning of the international community's first concerted effort to confront the problem of climate change.
- Known also as the Rio Convention, the UNFCCC established a framework for action to stabilise concentrations of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere.
- The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994, and nearly all of the world's nations—a total of 195—have now signed on.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **One District, One Product scheme of Uttar Pradesh**

The government of Uttar Pradesh has initiated One District, One Product scheme to encourage indigenous and specialized products and crafts of the state. The scheme aims to capitalize the rich heritage of the Uttar Pradesh by reviving them through modernization and publicisation to enhance the reach of these products.

#### **Objective of the Scheme**

- Uttar Pradesh is a vast state with vast diversity in all facets of life. The diversity of products and crafts in UP is breathtaking.
- The vast diversity encompasses the ancient and nutritious Kala namak rice, the rare and intriguing wheat-stalk craft, world-famous chikankari and zari-zardozi work on clothes, the intricate and stunning horn and bone work that uses the remains of dead animals rather than live ones, a nature-friendly replacement for ivory. Many of these rich traditions are facing the existential threat.
- The One District, One Product aims to revive these traditional heritages by reviving them through modernization and publicisation.

#### **Madhya Pradesh Government to create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (Spiritual department)**

The Government of Madhya Pradesh has announced setting up of a new Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department). The proposed new department will be set up by merging several existing departments.

As per the tweet from the chief minister's office of Madhya Pradesh Dharmik Nyas Evam Dharmasv Department (Religious Trust and Endowment Department), Anand Vibhag (Happiness Department) in addition to the Directorate of Religious Trust and Endowment, Madhya Pradesh Teerth Evam Mela Pradhikaran and Rajya Anand Sansthan would be merged to form the proposed Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department).

#### **Anand Vibhag (Happiness Department)**

Madhya Pradesh had become the first state in the country to create Happiness Department. The government had also announced the setting up of the Happiness Institute. Before announcing the creation of Happiness Department the state government had undertaken an in-depth study of the measures taken to assess the status of happiness among the citizens by the United Nations as well as the Government of Bhutan and America's International Management Institute.