

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)**

As per Agriculture Census conducted at an interval of every five years by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, the percentage of female operational holdings in the country have increased from 12.78 percent during 2010-11 to 13.78 percent during 2015-16.

Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)

- In line with the provisions of National Policy for Farmers (NPF) (2007), Ministry of Rural Development is already implementing a programme exclusively for women farmers namely MKSP.
- It is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- The primary objective of MKSP is to empower women by enhancing their participation in agriculture and to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for them.
- Funding support to the tune of up to 60% (90% for North Eastern States) for such projects is provided by the Government of India.

Feminization of Agriculture in India

- 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.
- Most of the women-headed households are not able to access extension services, farmers support institutions and production assets like seed, water, credit, subsidy etc.
- As agricultural workers, women are paid lower wage than men.
- MKSP recognizes the identity of “Mahila” as “Kisan” and strives to build the capacity of women in the domain of agro-ecologically sustainable practices.

Maritime Anti-Corruption Network

Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN), a global business network of over 110 companies working to tackle corruption in the maritime industry, has announced the launch of a Port Integrity Campaign in India.

Maritime Anti-Corruption Network

- The MACN is a global business network working towards the vision of a maritime industry free of corruption that enables fair trade to the benefit of society at large.
- Established in 2011 by a small group of committed maritime companies, MACN has grown to include over 100 members
- It has become one of the pre-eminent examples of collective action to tackle corruption.
- MACN and its members promote good corporate practice in the maritime industry for tackling bribes, facilitation payments and other forms of corruption.
- MACN collaborates with key stakeholders, including governments and international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), to identify and mitigate the root causes of corruption in the maritime industry.

About Port Integrity Campaign

- The campaign aims to reduce and (in the long term) eliminate integrity issues and bottlenecks to trade during operations in Indian ports.
- It is a collective action of MACN, the Government of India, international organizations, and local industry stakeholders.
- The pilot of the campaign will take place in Mumbai ports (MbPT and JNPT) and will run until October this year.

- The main activities of the campaign include implementation of integrity training for port officials and the establishment of clear escalation and reporting processes.

INDIAN ECONOMY

National Dairy Plan

Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying is implementing World Bank assisted National Dairy Plan – I in 18 States to support milk cooperatives and milk producer companies along with breeding improvement initiative.

Key features of the scheme:

- National Dairy Plan Phase I (NDP-I) is a Central Sector Scheme.
- Funding will be through a line of credit from the International Development Association (IDA), which along with the share of the Government of India will flow from DADF to NDDDB and in turn to eligible End Implementing Agencies (EIAs).
- NDP I will focus on 18 major milk producing states namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh which together account for over 90% of the country's milk production.

Objectives:

- To help increase productivity of milch animals and thereby increase milk production to meet the rapidly growing demand for milk.
- To help provide rural milk producers with greater access to the organised milk-processing sector.

End Implementation Agencies (EIAs) would be State Cooperative Dairy Federations; District Cooperative Milk Producers Unions; Cooperative form of enterprises such as Producer Companies; State Livestock Development Boards; Central Cattle Breeding Farms (CCBF), Central Frozen Semen Production and Training Institute (CFSP&TI), Regional Stations for Forage Production and Demonstration (RSFP&D); Registered Societies/ Trusts (NGOs); Section 25 Companies, subsidiaries of statutory bodies, ICAR Institutes and Veterinary/ Dairy Institutes/Universities that meet the eligibility criteria for each activity as may be decided by the National Steering Committee (NSC).

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Plan Bee

- Plan Bee, an amplifying system imitating the buzz of a swarm of honey bees to keep wild elephants away from railway tracks earned the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) the best innovation award in Indian Railways for the 2018-19 fiscal.
- A device was designed to generate the amplified sound of honey bees audible from 700-800 metres.
- The first instrument was installed at a level crossing west of Guwahati on a track adjoining the Rani Reserve Forest, an elephant habitat.
- The Plan Bee device has been helpful in diverting herds of elephants, especially when trains approach and dashing becomes imminent.
- A mix of Plan Bee and other measures have helped them save 1,014 elephants from 2014 to June 2019.

Why such plan?

- The desperation to find an “elephant repellent” was triggered by 67 jumbos being knocked down by trains from 2013 to June 2019.
- Most of these cases were reported from Assam and northern West Bengal.
- There are 29 earmarked elephant corridors with the operating zone of NFR spread across the north-eastern states and parts of Bihar and West Bengal.
- Trains are required to slow down at these corridors and adhere to speed specified on signs.
- But elephants have ventured into the path of trains even in non-corridor areas, often leading to accidents resulting in elephant deaths.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE
ETC****NASA to launch Dragonfly**

NASA plans to launch an unmanned nuclear-powered drone, Dragonfly as early as 2026 to search for life on Saturn's largest moon, Titan.

Key facts:

- Dragonfly aims to search for signs of microbial alien life on Saturn's moon Titan, while navigating its earth-like gravity and aerodynamics in the process.
- The mission will succeed NASA's Cassini probe, which ended its 13-year mission orbiting Saturn in September 2017 by diving into Saturn's atmosphere.
- Dragonfly mission is a part of NASA's New Frontiers program, which includes a series of space exploration missions, which are being conducted with the purpose of researching several of the Solar System bodies, including the dwarf planet Pluto.
- The New Frontiers programme also includes Pluto probe New Horizons, Jupiter probe Juno and OSIRIS-Rex asteroid mission.
- The Dragonfly mission replaces a previously discontinued concept project called Titan Saturn System Mission (TSSM), which required a balloon probe to circumnavigate Titan.

Why study Titan?

- Titan is an analog to the very early Earth, and can provide clues to how life may have arisen on our planet.
- Titan is larger than the planet Mercury and is the second largest moon in our solar system.
- As it orbits Saturn, it is about 886 million miles (1.4 billion kilometers) away from the Sun, about 10 times farther than Earth. Because it is so far from the Sun, its surface temperature is around -290 degrees Fahrenheit (-179 degrees Celsius). Its surface pressure is also 50 percent higher than Earth's.

Objectives of the mission:

- Explore diverse environments from organic dunes to the floor of an impact crater where liquid water and complex organic materials key to life once existed together for possibly tens of thousands of years.
- Study how far prebiotic chemistry may have progressed.
- Investigate the moon's atmospheric and surface properties and its subsurface ocean and liquid reservoirs.
- Search for chemical evidence of past or extant life.

EDITORIALS**Caution on spectrum**

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) reiterated its stance on the issue of spectrum pricing, including that of 5G, for the upcoming auctions. This was in response to the Digital Communications Commission, the apex decision-making body of the Department of Telecommunications, which had sought a review of the TRAI's August 2018 recommendations on the auction of spectrum.

Reviewing the Trai's recommendations

- The commission's call for reviewing the Trai's recommendations came amid concerns over the financial health of telcos, and worries that demand for spectrum is likely to be muted as consolidation in the sector has effectively left only three private telecom service providers.
- But, in its response, Trai has stayed with its earlier position, stating that all relevant factors, such as the methodology, assumptions, as well as developments between the spectrum auction held in October 2016 and its recommendations, released in August 2018, have been considered.

Telecom sector and revenue

- Over the years, the telecom sector has been a major source of revenue for the government.

- And at a time when the Centre is struggling to meet its revenue targets, higher proceeds from spectrum auctions could provide the much-needed boost to government coffers.
- But the temptation of revenue maximisation should be resisted when there are legitimate concerns over the financial health of the sector.

Lessons from the last bidding

- Aggressive bidding by telcos in the 3G auctions in 2010 marked a turning point in the industry's fortunes.
- As a result of the pile-up in debt, highly indebted telcos exercised restraint in the 2016 spectrum sale, with the government realising only Rs 65,789 crore as revenue against Rs 5.63 trillion (base price) worth of spectrum that had been put up for sale. The price war, which began in September 2016, only exacerbated the already precarious financial position of incumbents.
- Their deteriorating finances have also taken a toll on the government's revenue. In 2018-19, the Centre was able to collect only Rs 39,245 crore through licence fees and spectrum usage charges, as against the initial target of Rs 48,661 crore.
- In comparison, it had collected Rs 70,241 crore in 2016-17.
- While average revenues per user (ARPU) have risen of late, a turnaround is still some time away.
- With precarious finances, a repeat of the 2016 auction is a possibility.

Implications for Telecom Sector

- At such high prices, cash-strapped operators will find it difficult to bid, without sinking even more into debt.
- This could impact their capital expenditure, leaving them with fewer resources to invest in towers and fibre optics.
- Acknowledging the issues plaguing the sector, the telecom minister, Ravi Shankar Prasad, has recently set up a panel to rationalise levies, and to look into other issues.
- While it might be difficult to set aside Trai's recommendations, the government would do well to think carefully through the implications of the recommendations, before rushing to auction high-priced spectrum.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT

Govt to explore houseboat tourism

- In a bid to diversify its tourism offerings by exploring the potential of various water bodies and wetlands, the State Government took owners and operators of luxury houseboats, water sports and recreation projects in a three-day familiarisation trip to Bhitarkanika National Park and Chilika Lake.
- The owners and operators visited Bhitarkanika's mangrove swamps, called the sobriquet of 'India's Amazon' and Chilika Lake region comprising Rambha and Satapada sites as well as Tampara Lake.

Why such move?:

- Govt wants to lay special focus on niche tourism segments such as houseboat tourism, which seamlessly mingles with eco-tourism and water recreation.
- Odisha has a habit of creating benchmarks and workable models for sustainable enterprise. In this case too, strives to synergise various segments of water-based tourism as a sustainable segment.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The attitude of the Aspirant should be like that of a lover ever yearning to meet the beloved but never giving way to despair.

Patanjali

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: What to you understand by Spectrum Auction? How should the Govt address the concerns related to spectrum?

Ans: Energy travels in the form of waves known as electromagnetic waves, these waves differ from each other in terms of frequencies, and this whole range of frequencies is called the spectrum. In Telecom electromagnetic waves of different wavelengths are used, they are divided into bands based on frequencies. A spectrum auction is a process whereby a government uses an auction system to sell the rights (licences) to transmit signals over specific bands of the electromagnetic spectrum and to assign scarce spectrum resources. Spectrum auctions makes use of natural resources for revenue raising and ensuring economic development.

Existing Concerns:

- Earlier spectrum was allotted to various companies which are favourable of government's choice at much cheaper prices or for free. (2G-Scam)
- At critical times, government demanded Telecoms to buy fresh spectrums to renew their licenses, telecoms also bought spectrums at high cost to sustain their markets.
- Once few reforms had brought in spectrum auctions, the prices of spectrums went sky high and even coal/iron ore allocations were cancelled for the same reason that they were not competitively bid.
- This High auction bids had caused mobile tariffs to rise, and now tariffs are decided by competition.
- These auctions tried to maximize government revenues instead of maximising development by bringing in greater benefits to citizens or to the private sector.

Measures needs to be taken:

- Government need to remove the irrational excitement of the past to address the impact of bad policy like the shortage of spectrum.
- If government's design is right, it can auction even water while keeping tariffs affordable or even subsidised, thus a better policy design is crucial.
- The auction design must ensure the poor get a service at affordable price instead of concentrating on revenues.
- Reforms also need to be roped in to reduce the ridiculously high license/spectrum charges and address the problems faced by the industry for better ease of doing.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIR BASED MCQS

1. Consider the following statements w.r.t Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP).

1. This is an exclusive programme for Women Farmers only.
2. It is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission.

Which of the statements is/are incorrect?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2**

2. Consider the following statements w.r.t Maritime Anti-Corruption Network.

1. It is a global business network.
2. It has launched a Port Integrity Campaign across Asia for eliminating integrity issues and bottlenecks to trade during operations.

Which of the statements is/are incorrect?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only**
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. Consider the following statements w.r.t National Dairy Plan.

1. National Dairy Plan Phase I (NDP I) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme
2. It has been developed with assistance from the FAO.

Which of the statements is/are incorrect?

- (a) 1 only

- (b) 2 only

- (c) **Both 1 and 2**

- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Consider the following statements w.r.t the Plan Bee.

1. It is plan for conservation of Honey Bees.
2. It is mainly being implemented in the North Eastern States.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

- (b) 2 only**

- (c) Both 1 and 2

- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. Consider the following statements w.r.t the 'Dragonfly' drone to be launched by NASA.

1. It is a nuclear-powered drone.
2. It aims to search for signs of microbial alien life on Saturn's moon Titan.
3. This mission replaces a previously discontinued concept project called 'Titan Saturn System Mission'

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2

- (b) 1 and 3

- (c) 2 and 3

- (d) 1, 2 and 3**

6. Which of the following Mangroves is called as the Sobriquet of "India's Amazon"?

- (a) Sundarban

- (b) Bhitarkanika**

- (c) Godavari-Krishna

- (d) Pichavaram