

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**E-Cigarettes**

The Union Cabinet has approved the Promulgation of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement).

Salient Features of Ordinance:

- Any production, import, export, transport, sale (including online sale) or advertisement (including online advertisement) of e-cigarettes shall be a cognizable offence punishable with an imprisonment of up to one year or fine up to Rs. 1 lakh or both for the first offence.
- For a subsequent offence, there will be imprisonment of up to 3 years and fine up to Rs. 5 lakh.
- Storage of electronic-cigarettes shall also be punishable with an imprisonment up to 6 months or fine up to Rs 50,000 or both.
- The Sub-Inspector of Police has been designated as the Authorized Officer to take action under the Ordinance. The Central or State Governments may also designate any other equivalent officer(s) as Authorized Officer for enforcement of the provisions of the Ordinance.

Electronic-cigarettes

- Electronic-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that produce aerosol by heating a solution containing nicotine, which is the addictive substance in combustible cigarettes.
- These include all forms of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), Heat Not Burn Products, e-Hookah and the like devices.
- Their use has increased exponentially and has acquired epidemic proportions in developed countries, especially among youth and children. These products are usually marketed as being safer alternatives for conventional cigarettes but such notions of safety are false.
- The current decision to ban them has come on the back of an advisory issued by the Government in 2018 to all States to consider banning e-cigarettes. 16 States and 1 UT have already banned e cigarettes in their jurisdictions.
- Recently, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) also recommended a complete ban on e-cigarettes based on currently available scientific evidence.

Malnutrition In Under-5 Children

A recent report published in The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health gives comprehensive estimates of disease burden due to child and maternal malnutrition and the trends of its indicators in every state of India from 1990 to 2017.

Key findings include:

- The death rate attributable to malnutrition in under-5 children in India has dropped by two-thirds from 1990 to 2017. Malnutrition is, however, still the underlying risk factor for 68% of the deaths in under-five children in India.
- The Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALY) rate attributable to malnutrition in children varies 7-fold among the states — a gap between a high of 74,782 in Uttar Pradesh and a low of 11,002 in Kerala.
- The proportion of under-5 deaths attributable to malnutrition, which is 68.2% across India, ranges between a high of 72.7% in Bihar and a low of 50.8% in Kerala.
- Among the malnutrition indicators, low birth weight is the largest contributor to child deaths in India, followed by child growth failure which includes stunting, underweight, and wasting.
- The prevalence of low birth weight was 21 per cent in India in 2017, ranging from 9 per cent in Mizoram to 24 per cent in UP.

- Incidences of stunting among children was 39 per cent in India in 2017. This ranged from 21 per cent in Goa to 49 per cent in UP.
- In 2017, 33 per cent of the children in India were reportedly underweight, ranging from 16 per cent in Manipur to 42 per cent in Jharkhand.
- The incidences of anaemia among children, on other other hand, was 60 per cent in India in 2017, ranging from 21 per cent in Mizoram to 74 per cent in Haryana.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

International Migrant Stock 2019

According to the International Migrant Stock 2019, Indian diaspora (at 17.5 million) is the largest in the world.

About:

- The International Migrant Stock 2019 is a dataset released by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).
- It provides the latest estimates of the number of international migrants by age, sex and origin for all countries and areas of the world.

Key findings for 2019:

- In 2019, the number of migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million. The top ten countries of origin account for one-third of all international migrants.
- India is the leading country of origin of international migrants in 2019 with a 17.5 million strong diaspora. Migrants from Mexico constituted the second largest diaspora with 11.8 million people followed by China (10.7 million), Russia (10.5 million) and Syria (8.2 million).
- Regionally, Europe hosted the largest number of international migrants (82 million), followed by Northern America (59 million) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (49 million).
- At the country level, United States of America hosting the largest number of international migrants (51 million), with Germany and Saudi Arabia hosting the second and third largest numbers of migrants (13 million each).
- India hosted 5.1 million international migrants in 2019. The highest number of international migrants came from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. International migrants as a share of total population in India was steady at 0.4 % from 2010 to 2019.
- In terms of the share of international migrants in total population, the highest proportion was recorded in Oceania region (including Australia and New Zealand) at 21.2%.
- The global number of refugees and asylum seekers increased by 13 million between 2010 and 2017. Northern Africa and Western Asia hosted around 46% of the global number of refugees and asylum seekers.
- The share of women and girls in the global number of international migrants fell slightly, from 49% in 2000 to 48% in 2019. The share of migrant women was highest in Northern America (52%) and Europe (51%).
- In terms of age, one out of every seven international migrants is below the age of 20 years.

Vaccine Hesitancy

The World Health Organization (WHO) has included 'vaccine hesitancy' as one of the 10 threats to global health for the year 2019.

About:

- Vaccine hesitancy means the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines.
- Vaccine hesitancy threatens to reverse progress made in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases. Measles, for example, has seen a 30% increase in cases globally in 2018.

- Vaccination is one of the most cost-effective ways of avoiding disease – it currently prevents 2-3 million deaths a year, and a further 1.5 million could be avoided if global coverage of vaccinations improved.
- Some of the reasons why people choose not to vaccinate are: Complacency, inconvenience in accessing vaccines, and lack of confidence are key reasons underlying hesitancy.

Ten threats to global health in 2019 according to WHO are:

- Air pollution and climate change
- Noncommunicable diseases
- Global influenza pandemic
- Fragile and vulnerable settings
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Ebola and other high-threat pathogens
- Weak primary health care
- Vaccine hesitancy
- Dengue
- HIV

INDIAN ECONOMY

Nirvik

Ministry of Commerce & Industry has introduced NIRVIK Scheme to enhance loan availability and ease the lending process.

Salient features of the scheme:

- Ministry of Commerce & Industry through Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) has introduced a new Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS) called NIRVIK to enhance loan availability and ease the lending process.
- Under ECIS, the insurance cover percentage has also been enhanced to 90% from the present average of 60% for both Principal and Interest of the loan for pre- and post-shipment credit.
- Claim inspection would be waived for up to Rs. 10 crore. For claims higher than this amount, inspection of bank documents and records by ECGC officials will be mandatory.
- The existing premium rate would be lowered, with loans to be categorised into two broad categories of those below ₹80 crore and those above that amount. Loans above Rs. 80 crore will be further divided into those that are not for gold, jewellery or diamonds, and those that are.
- Public sector banks had agreed to give the ECGC-covered loans at a rate that is a maximum of 2.2% higher than the prevailing repo rate, and this would be adjusted as the repo rate changes.

Steel Sector

Government of India has taken couple of initiatives in recent days to revive the steel sector.

Steel Import Monitoring System (SIMS):

- Steel Import Monitoring System (SIMS) will be effective from 1st November, 2019.
- The system has been developed in consultation with Ministry of Steel on the pattern of US Steel Import Monitoring and Analysis (SIMA) system.
- The SIMS will provide advance information about steel imports to Government and stake holders including, steel industry (producers), steel consumers(importers) to have effective policy interventions.

SAIL allowed to offload 25% of iron ore production:

- The Ministry of Mines has allowed Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) to offload, in a year, up to a quantity equivalent to maximum of 25 % of total iron ore production in the previous year. It is valid for a period of two years.

- This is subject to clearance from the respective State governments where the mines are located.
- This implies that around 7 million tonnes of iron ore, produced at mines in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh, can be offloaded by SAIL to the domestic market after getting the necessary clearances. This will ensure raw material security for Indian steel industry.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC

Head On Generation (HOG) Technology

Ministry of Railways has decided to adopt Head on Generation (HOG) technology in all LHB Coaches trains within this year. Till date 342 trains have already been converted into HOG.

- In HOG Technology, the power will be drawn from the overhead electric supply.
- The power generator cars which used to make huge noise and emit fumes will no more be there.
- In place of two such generator cars there will be one standby silent generator car to be used for emergency.
- In place of the other car, there will be LSLRD (LHB Second Luggage, Guard & Divyaang Compartment). This LSLRD will also have capability to convert power from the overhead supply to be utilised in the entire train while providing space for luggage guard room and additional passengers.

Significance:

- The move will make the train journey quieter for travellers and more economical for the carrier.
- Till date, 342 trains have already been converted into HOG. This has resulted in savings of approximate Rs 800 crore.
- The new technology HOG will be available at Rs. 6 per unit as compared to the End-on-Generation (EOG) system, in which cost of power is Rs. 22 per unit.

DEFENCE

Anjali Singh

Wing Commander Anjali Singh has become the first woman in the Indian military history to be posted as a military diplomat at an Indian mission abroad.

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) send her to Moscow as a deputy air attaché. The 41-year-old officer is an aeronautical engineer who served with fighter squadrons during her 17-year military career
- Until now, only male officers from the three services were appointed as military attaches in overseas Indian missions. The change came about during Nirmala Sitharam's tenure as defence minister when she backed the proposal to give military women more global exposure.
- The army and the navy will also appoint women officers as defence attaches in the near future depending on the candidates meeting the requirement.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The harder you work for something, the greater you'll feel when you achieve it.