

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**National Health Mission (NHM)**

The Union Cabinet has been apprised of the Progress under National Health Mission (NHM) and Decisions of the Empowered Programme Committee and Mission Steering Group of the NHM.

Key elements:

- There has been acceleration in decline of MMR, Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) and the IMR since the launch of the NRHM/NHM. At the current rate of decline, India should be able to reach its SDG target (MMR-70, U5MR-25) much before the due year i.e. 2030.
- Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) has been strengthened. Due to this, there is 16% jump in identification of new cases in one year. Newer drug regimen of Bedaquiline and Delamanid and nutrition support to all the TB patients for the duration of the treatment has been rolled throughout the country.
- The routine and recurring incentives of ASHAs got increased from 1000 per month to 2000 per month. ASHAs and ASHA Facilitators were provided the cover of Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Beema Yojna and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Beema Yojna.
- During 2018-19, Rotavirus vaccine (RVV) was introduced in additional two States. Till today, all the States/UTs are covered with RVV.
- During 2018-19, Pneumococcal Conjugated Vaccine (PCV) was expanded to MP, Haryana and the remaining districts of Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- Anaemia Mukt Bharat (AMB) Abhiyaan was launched under POSHAN Abhiyaan in April 2018.
- Home Based Care for Young Child (HBYC) programme was introduced under POSHAN Abhiyaan.
- National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme was approved for prevention, management and treatment of Hepatitis to A, B, C and E and rollout was initiated.

Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) Programme

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) announced its partnership with Indian Institute of Management (IIM)- Bangalore to launch a new programme 'Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF)'.

About:

- It is aimed to train individuals, who will leverage the IIMB ecosystem in entrepreneurship and public policy and work with the district administration in strengthening the process of skilling to create a vibrant local district economy.
- The two-year Fellowship programme will be delivered by IIMB's Centre of Public Policy (CPP), an independent public interest-oriented policy think-tank engaged in research, teaching, training, and capacity-building.
- The programme will be launched on a pilot basis in 75 districts in 6 states including Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- Those who have a graduate degree from a recognised university and are citizens of India in the age group of 21-30 years will be eligible to apply for it.
- It has been Designed under Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP).

Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP)

- Launched by the Government of India in January 2018, SANKALP is a World Bank loan assisted project that aims to strengthen institutional mechanisms for skill development and increase access to quality and market-relevant training for youth across the country.
- Four key result areas have been identified under SANKALP viz: (i) Institutional Strengthening; (ii) Quality Assurance; (iii) Inclusion; and (iv) Expanding Skills through PPPs.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)**

The Union Cabinet has approved the relaxation of the mandatory requirement of Aadhaar Seeded data as a pre-condition for release of funds to the beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme.

About:

- The Central Sector Scheme, namely, the PM-KISAN provides income support to land-holding farmers' families, subject to certain exclusions, by way of payment of Rs.6000/- per year.
- The amount is released in three 4-monthly instalments of Rs.2000 /- each directly into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries through DBT mode.

Recent development:

- Under this scheme, after 1st August, 2019, release of 3rd Instalment onwards to those beneficiaries who got first instalment during December, 2018 - March, 2019 and 2nd instalment during April-July, 2019 is to be made only on the basis of Aadhaar seeded database.
- However, it has not been possible to get 100% Aadhaar seeding for release of funds as per the prescribed time schedule before release of instalments after 1st August, 2019. Therefore, the mandatory requirement of Aadhaar seeding for release of benefits after 1st August, 2019 has been relaxed till 30th November, 2019.
- This will enable immediate release of benefits to a large number of farmers who are not able to avail the same due this requirement. This mandatory requirement will remain applicable for release of benefits w.e.f. 1st December, 2019 onwards.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019–2023**

Union Minister for Health, Dr Harsh Vardhan launched 'The WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019–2023: A Time of Transition'.

About:

- The Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) provides a strategic roadmap for WHO to work with the Government of India towards achieving its health sector goals. The CCS outlines how WHO can support the Ministry of Health and other allied Ministries to drive impact at the country level.
- WHO's support to the government will fall under four strategic priorities:
 - accelerating progress on universal health coverage,
 - promoting health and wellness,
 - protecting the population against health emergencies, and
 - enhancing India's global leadership in health.
- The India CCS is one of the first that fully aligns itself with the newly adopted WHO 13th General Programme of Work and its 'triple billion' targets, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and WHO South-East Asia Region's eight Flagship Priorities.
- It captures the work of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework for 2018–2022.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**Green Wall of India**

The Centre is mulling an ambitious plan to create a 1,400km long and 5km wide green belt from Gujarat to the Delhi-Haryana border. The plan is inspired by Africa's 'Great Green Wall' project, running from Senegal (West) to Djibouti (East), which came into effect in 2007.

- The overarching objective of India's Green Wall will be to address the rising rates of land degradation and the eastward expansion of the Thar desert.
- The green belt being planned from Porbandar to Panipat will help in restoring degraded land through afforestation along the Aravali hill range. It will also act as a barrier for dust coming from the deserts in western India and Pakistan.
- The Aravali has been identified as one of the key degraded zones to be taken up for greening under India's target to restore 26 million hectares (mha) of its land.
- A 2016 report from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had also indicated that Delhi, Gujarat and Rajasthan had already degraded over 50% of their land.

Great Green Wall of Africa

- It aims to restore Africa's degraded landscapes and transform millions of lives in one of the world's poorest regions, the Sahel.

- The African initiative is still only 15% complete.
- Once fully completed, the Wall will be the largest living structure on the planet – an 8,000 km natural wonder of the world stretching across the entire width of the continent.
- African countries during the UNCCCD COP14 sought global support in terms of finance to make the Wall a reality in the continent's Sahel region by 2030.
- Sahel is a semiarid region of western and north-central Africa extending from Senegal eastward to Sudan.
- It forms a transitional zone between the arid Sahara (desert) to the north and the belt of humid savannas to the south

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

Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme (PMILP)- 'DHRUV'

Union Human Resource Development Minister will launch the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme- 'DHRUV' from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Headquarters at Bengaluru on 10th October, 2019.

About:

- The programme will be called DHRUV (after the Pole Star) and every student to be called 'DHRUV TARA'.
- Under this programme, gifted children will be mentored and nurtured by renowned experts in centres of excellence across the country in different areas, so that they can reach their full potential.
- 60 outstandingly talented students have been selected in the first batch from across the country. The students will be broadly from classes 9 to 12, from all schools.
- After the launch, a programme of around 14 days' duration will be conducted with these 60 with a Valedictory function on 23rd October, 2019, he informed. It will cover two areas i.e. Science and Performing Arts.
- This is only the first phase of the programme which will be expanded gradually to other fields like creative writing etc.

Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument For Navigation And Information (GEMINI)

Union Minister for Earth Sciences launched the Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information (GEMINI) device.

About:

- GEMINI device will disseminate seamless and effective dissemination of emergency information and communication on disaster warnings, Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ) and Ocean States Forecasts (OSF) to fishermen.
- The device will help to provide information related to disaster warnings when fishermen move away from the coast beyond 10 to 12 kilometres.
- The GEMINI device receives and transfers the data received from GAGAN satellite/s to a mobile through Bluetooth communication. A mobile application developed by INCOIS decodes and displays the information in nine regional languages.
- It has been developed by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), and Airports Authority of India (AAI). It is electronically designed and manufactured by a private industry M/S Acord, Bangalore under Make in India Program.

Malware Smominru

Malware Smominru, whose incidence was first reported in 2017, continues to infect computers in a big way.

- It is affecting nearly 4,700 computers every day, with over 90,000 computers affected globally in August 2019.
- The botnet relies on more than 20 dedicated servers, mostly located in the US, though some are hosted in Malaysia and Bulgaria.
- In its post-infection phase, it steals victim credentials, installs a Trojan module and a cryptominer and propagates inside the network.

- The malware seems to have the ability to come back to hit the old victims if they fail to tackle the problem completely. About one-fourth of the affected machines were infected again after Smominru was removed from them.
- The victims range from universities to healthcare providers suggesting that hackers are not too particular about their targets.
- However, about 85% of infections have occurred on Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 systems.
- The objective seems to silently use infected computers for mining cryptocurrency at the victim's expense.
- China, Taiwan, Russia, Brazil and the US have seen the most attacks.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, AWARDS, EVENTS ETC.

World Mental Health Day

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is observing the "World Mental Health Day" on 10th October, 2019.

About:

- World Mental Health Day is organized by the World Federation for Mental Health. This year's Day is supported by WHO, the International Association for Suicide Prevention, and United for Global Mental Health.
- According to the WHO, Every year about 800,000 people die due to suicide, which makes it one suicide every 40 seconds. Hence, this year's theme of World Mental Health Day is "40 seconds of action". The objective is to raise awareness about the surging numbers.
- In India, around 2.2 lakh people die by suicide every year. Most suicide deaths happen between people of age groups 15 to 39. Women are more likely to die by suicide. India has the third-highest female suicide rate (14.7%) in the world.

India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (IICTF)

The first ever 'India International Cooperatives Trade Fair'(IICTF) is going to be held at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi from 11th till 13th October, 2019.

About:

- Objective: The Trade Fair is aimed at promoting cooperative to cooperative trade within India and abroad leading to enhanced rural and farm prosperity.
- Bodies involved: Steered by National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), the Fair is being conducted with the support of one international organization (NEDAC), three Ministries, four State Governments and several apex level Indian cooperative organizations.
- The Cooperative sector has a big role to play in doubling agriculture exports from present US \$ 30 billion+ to US\$ 60 billion+ by 2022 as envisaged in the Agriculture Export Policy 2018.

Yuva Sahakar -Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019:

- NCDC has formulated Yuva Sahakar -Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019 which will be launched during the fair by Union Minister for Agriculture.
- The Scheme has an annual outlay of 100 crores.
- The Scheme is liberal to cooperatives in the North Eastern Region, cooperatives registered and operating in Aspirational Districts as identified by NITI Aayog, cooperatives with 100 % women/SC/ST/ PwD members.
- It is in line with Government's focus on programmes like Start-up India and Stand-up India aimed at young entrepreneurs with new and innovative ideas.

Nobel Prize In Chemistry 2019

The 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry are awarded to John B Goodenough of the University of Texas; M Stanley Whittingham of the State University of New York at Binghamton; and Akira Yoshino of Asahi Kasei Corporation and Meijo University in Japan.

About:

- The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2019 rewards the development of the lithium-ion battery, which "laid the foundation of a wireless, fossil fuel-free society."

- The lithium-ion battery is a lightweight, rechargeable and powerful battery that is now used in everything from mobile phones to laptops and electric vehicles. It can also store significant amounts of energy from solar and wind power, making possible a fossil fuel-free society.
- The foundation of the lithium-ion battery was laid during the oil crisis of the 1970s.
- M Stanley Whittingham, discovered an energy-rich material called titanium disulphide, which he used to make a cathode - the positive terminal - in a lithium battery.
- Sony released the first commercial lithium-ion batteries in 1991, based on Yoshino's configuration.

Global Competitiveness Index 4.0: WEF

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the 2019 edition of the Global Competitiveness Report which features the Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 (GCI 4.0).

- This edition of the report focuses on building shared prosperity (addressing inequality) and managing the transition to a sustainable economy (addressing environmental issues) along with competitiveness and growth.
- The report is based on 12 set of factors (pillars) that determine productivity. These are: Institutions; Infrastructure; ICT adoption; Macroeconomic stability; Health; Skills; Product market; Labour market; Financial system; Market size; Business dynamism; and Innovation capability.
- The index has been an annual edition since 1979.

Key Findings

- India has moved down 10 places to the rank of 68th compared to the 58th rank of 2018 primarily because of faster improvements of several countries previously ranked lower.
- In South Asia, Sri Lanka is the most improved country in the region at 84th, Bangladesh (105th), Nepal (108th) and Pakistan (110th).
- China (28th) is the best performer among the BRICS countries.
- The Russian Federation ranks 43rd, South Africa is 60th, India is 68th and Brazil is ranked 71st.
- Singapore has become the world's most competitive economy in 2019, pushing the US to second place.
- Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) is ranked 3rd, the Netherlands is 4th and Switzerland is ranked 5th in the index.
- Vietnam (67th) registered the highest improvement across the globe.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Move out of your comfort zone. You can only grow if you are willing to feel awkward and uncomfortable when you try something new.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Examine the potential of PM Kisan Yojana along with its shortcomings. Also compare it with other direct cash transfer schemes being implemented by State governments.

Answer :

PM-Kisan Yojana provides a flat Rs 6,000 per year to all small and marginal farmers owning up to 5 acres (2 hectare) of land payable in three installments.

Prime Minister launched the ambitious Rs 75,000 crore Yojana in Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh by digitally transferring the first installment of Rs 2,000 to the accounts of over 1 crore small and marginal farmers.

Potential of PM Kisan Yojana:

- This yojana is direct cash transfers (DCT) scheme which is the best way to support farmers — as opposed to subsidised supply of fertiliser and electricity or physical purchase of produce at above market prices.
- Farmers are in distress in most parts of the country as they are not getting better returns because of low prices due to bumper production of foodgrain, oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton horticulture crops etc, crop loss due to climate vulnerabilities, inadequate infrastructural, input and financial support.
- Around 12 crore small and marginal farmer families are expected to benefit from this. It would not only provide assured supplemental income to the most vulnerable farmer families, but would also meet their emergent needs especially before the harvest season.
- It will make farmers credit worthy and ensure their inclusion in formal financial institutions.
- It would pave the way for the farmers to earn and live a respectable living.

Shortcomings:

- An installment of Rs 2,000 under PM-Kisan would enable a farmer to barely buy Bt cotton seeds for two acres, meet his fertiliser requirement of wheat for two-thirds of an acre or harvest cane from one-sixth of an acre. So, even if the money is transferred directly into the farmer's Aadhar-seeded bank sans any leakage, its utility from a purely agricultural standpoint is quite limited.
- Narrow time window: Scheme was announced in the Interim Budget on February 1 and set a deadline of February 20 for submission of applications. Giving state governments such a narrow time window to implement it is faced with various challenges.
- Burden on exchequer: The Centre alone has, for 2019-20, budgeted a mammoth Rs 2,77,206 crore towards food, fertiliser and crop loan subsidies. This is over and above the Rs 75,000 crore provision towards PM-Kisan.
- It would not help landless labourers and sharecroppers.
- A comparison with other direct cash transfer schemes being implemented by State governments—

Rythu Bandhu scheme of the Telangana government:

Telangana government grant of Rs. 4,000/- per acre per farmer each season for the purchase of inputs like Seeds, Fertilizers, Pesticides, Labour and other investments in the field operations of Farmer's choice for the crop season.

Advantages of Rythu Bandhu:

- Take care of initial investment of every farmer and
- Not allowing Farmers to fall into the debt trap again

Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income augmentation (KALIA) in Odisha:

- All farmers will be provided Rs 10,000 per family as assistance for cultivation. Each family will get Rs 5,000 separately in the kharif and rabi seasons, for five cropping seasons between 2018-19 and 2021-22.
- It targets 10 lakh landless households, and specifically SC and ST families. They will be supported with a unit cost of Rs 12,500 for activities like goat rearing, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, poultry farming and fishery.
- It also includes a life insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh and additional personal accident coverage of the same amount for 57 lakh households. Crop loans up to Rs 50,000 are interest-free.
- It primary targets small farmers, cultivators and landless agricultural labourers.

Way forward

- By abolishing the subsidy on fertiliser and farm credit and limiting that on food to maintaining a minimum buffer stock to enable market intervention if necessary, it would be possible to create a Central DCT fund.
- The money from this can be used not only for resource-poor landowning farmers, but even share-croppers, landless agricultural labourers and other vulnerable households in both rural and urban areas.
- Such support is welcome, especially because it is not market-distorting. And with Aadhaar-seeded bank accounts and digitisation of land records, it can be well-targeted too.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS

1. The proposed Green Wall of India is a stretch spanning which of the following states?

(a) Kerala, Maharashtra
(b) Tamil Nadu, West Bengal
(c) **Gujarat, Delhi**
(d) Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh

2. Consider the following statements:

1. World Mental Health Day is organized annually by the World Health Organization (WHO).
2. Its theme for 2019 is- 'Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention.'

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

3. Recently in news 'Smominru' is a type of

(a) **Malware**
(b) Exoplanet
(c) Mini Satellite
(d) Cryptocurrency

4. Consider the following statements:

1. Global Competitiveness Index report is released annually by the World Bank.
2. India is the best performing nation amongst BRICS countries in the 2019 edition of the Global Competitiveness Report.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

5. With reference to the National Health Mission (NHM), consider the following statements:

1. The routine and recurring incentives of ASHAs got increased from 1000 per month to 2000 per month.

2. Home Based Care for Young Child (HBYC) programme was introduced under POSHAN Abhiyaan.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

6. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It provides income support to land-holding farmers' families, subject to certain exclusions, by way of payment of Rs.100000/- per year.
2. The amount is released in three 4-monthly instalments of Rs.25000 /- each directly into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries through DBT mode.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

7. With reference to India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (IICTF), consider the following statements:

1. It is aimed at promoting cooperative to cooperative trade within India and abroad leading to enhanced rural and farm prosperity.
2. Recently National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has formulated Yuva Sahakar -Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

8. With reference to the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF)', consider the following statements:

1. It is an initiative taken by Ministry of Human Resource Development.
2. Those who have a graduate degree from a recognised university and are citizens of India in the age group of 21-30 years will be eligible to apply for it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

9. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme- 'DHRUV', consider the following statements:

1. Under this programme, gifted children will be mentored and nurtured by renowned experts in centres of excellence across the country in different areas.
2. The programme will be called DHRUV (after the Pole Star) and every student to be called 'DHRUV TARA'.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

3. 1 only
- (a) 2 only
- (b) Both 1 and 2**
- (c) Neither 1 nor 2

10. With reference to the Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information (GEMINI) device, consider the following statements:

1. It has been developed by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), and Airports Authority of India (AAI).
2. The device will help to provide information related to disaster warnings when fishermen move away from the coast beyond 10 to 12 kilometres.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

11. Who among the following have been awarded the 2019 Nobel Prize for Chemistry?

- (a) John B Goodenough, M Stanley Whittingham and Akira Yoshino**
- (b) George Smith, Frances Arnold and Gregory Winter
- (c) Joachim Frank, Richard Henderson and Jacques Dubochet
- (d) Fraser Stoddart, Jean-Pierre Sauvage and Ben Feringa