

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Jaccha-Baccha Survey (JABS)**

According to a new survey, called the Jaccha-Baccha Survey (JABS), a high proportion of women do not eat enough during pregnancy.

About:

- The Jaccha-Baccha Survey (JABS) was conducted in June in six states (Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh) to map the state of pregnant and nursing women.
- The survey was conducted under the guidance of development economists Jean Dreze and Reetika Khera.

Key findings of the survey:

- Within the six states, which the survey divided into laggard and leader states, Uttar Pradesh performed the worst, while Himachal Pradesh, on average, performed the best.
- UP also threw up the worst numbers on pregnant women not getting adequate rest — either because they had no one to help out at home, or because they had to actually go out and work on the farm in their condition.
- The proportion of women who had to borrow or sell assets just to meet child delivery expenses too, was quite high, especially among the laggard states.
- On access to basic healthcare facilities, the survey found that 36% women in UP did not get a single check-up at a primary health centre across different schemes.
- Less than half of pregnant women in rural India eat nutritious food.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**

According to data obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, PMMVY scheme benefitted just 31% eligible mothers.

Key findings:

- Almost 61% of beneficiaries registered under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) between April 2018 and July 2019 (38.3 lakh out of the total 62.8 lakh enrolled) received the full amount of ₹ 6,000 promised under the scheme.
- However, the researchers assert that since the scheme failed to reach at least 49% of all mothers who would have delivered their first child (an estimated total of 123 lakh for 2017 according to the researchers), the scheme was able to benefit only 31% of its intended beneficiaries.

Related Info:

- The PMMVY is targeted only at women delivering their first child. A cash amount of ₹ 6,000 is transferred to the bank account of the beneficiary in three instalments upon meeting certain conditions including early registration of pregnancy, having at least one ante-natal check-up and registration of child birth.

Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK)

The Union Minister of Women and Child Development (WCD), along with Bill Gates, co-chair of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched the Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK) in New Delhi.

About:

- The BPKK will be a repository of diverse crops across 128 agro-climatic zones in India for better nutritional outcomes.
- The Kosh aims at reducing malnutrition through a multi-sectoral results-based framework, including agriculture, among women and children across the country
- Ministry of Women and Child Development has collaborated with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for this project. The Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh seeks to promote healthy dietary practices and tackle under-nutrition in a sustainable manner.

Five-point action programme to make India nutrition secure: On this occasion, eminent agricultural scientist, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, in his address, said that to make India nutrition secure a five-point action programme has to be implemented:

- Ensure calorie rich diet for women, expectant mothers and children
- Ensure intake of proteins in the form of pulses to eradicate protein hunger in women and children
- Eradicate hidden hunger due to deficiency of micro nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin B, Iron and Zinc
- Ensure clean drinking water supply
- Spreading nutrition literacy in every village particularly in mothers with children less than 100 days' old.

Kimberley Process

The plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) is being hosted by India from 18th to 22nd November 2019 in New Delhi.

Significance of KPCS

- India has been actively involved in the development of the Kimberley Process (KP) as an important protocol in trade of diamonds which has ensured that 99.8% of the diamonds in the world are conflict-free.
 - The Kimberley Process (KP) is a commitment to remove conflict diamonds from the global supply chain.
 - Conflict Diamonds means rough diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments.
- Currently, India exports around US \$24 billion worth cut and polished diamonds which is expected to reach an export target of US \$1 trillion in the upcoming years.
- The importance of KPCS is immense to India as more than one million people are directly employed by the diamond industry. The industry plays a pivotal role in sustaining the livelihoods of these people.

Kimberley Process Certification Scheme

- The KPCS came into effect from 1st January 2003 and evolved into an effective mechanism for stopping the trade in conflict diamonds.
- India is one of the founder members of the KPCS. India had earlier chaired KPCS in the year 2008.
- The Kimberley Process is a joint initiative involving Government, International Diamond Industry and Civil Society to stem the flow of Conflict Diamonds.
- It is also described in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.
- At present, KPCS has 55 members representing 82 countries including EU with 28 members.
- It is chaired on a rotating basis by participating countries.
- Since 2003, India has been actively participating in the KPCS process and is a member of almost all Working Groups of KP (except the Working Group on Artisanal and Alluvial Production (WGAAP)).
 - Department of Commerce is the nodal Department, and
 - Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) is designated as the KPCS Importing and Exporting Authority in India. GJEPC is responsible for issuing KP Certificates and is also the custodian of KP Certificates received in the country.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

Za'ir-Al-Bahr (Roar of The Sea)

The inaugural edition of the Bilateral Maritime Exercise Za'ir-Al-Bahr (Roar of the Sea) is being conducted from 17 to 21 November 2019 between the Indian Navy and Qatari Emiri Naval Forces.

About:

- The inaugural edition of the Bilateral Maritime Exercise between the two navies would further strengthen the robust defence co-operation between the India and Qatar, especially in the fight against terrorism, maritime piracy and maritime security.

- The five-day bilateral maritime exercise at Doha includes surface action, air defence, maritime surveillance as well as social and sports events.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Company Law Committee-2019

The report of the Company Law Committee-2019 was presented to the Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs by Injeti Srinivas, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, who chaired the Committee.

About:

- The Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in September, 2019 to further decriminalise the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 based on their gravity and to take other concomitant measures to provide further Ease of Living for corporates in the country.
- The Committee has proposed amendments in 46 penal provisions, so as to either remove criminality, or to restrict the punishment to only fine, or to allow rectification of defaults through alternative methods, which would lead to de-clogging of the criminal justice system.

The main recommendations of the Committee are as follows:

- Re-categorising 23 offences out of the 66 remaining compoundable offences under the Act, to be dealt with in the in-house adjudication framework wherein these defaults would be subject to a penalty levied by an adjudicating officer.
- In addition, the quantum of penalties recommended are lower than the quantum of fines presently provided in the Act.
- Retention of status-quo in case of the non-compoundable offences.
- Proposing benches of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal;
- Extending applicability of Section 446B (lower penalties for small companies and one person companies) to all provisions which attract monetary penalties and extending the benefit to producer companies and start-ups also;
- Providing power to enhance the thresholds which trigger applicability of Corporate Social Responsibility provisions;
- Providing for appeal against the orders of the Regional Directors before the NCLT after due examination;
- Exempting certain private placement requirements for Qualified Institutional Placements (QIPs) after due consultation with SEBI;

Deposit Insurance (DI)

With the failure of the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank reigniting the debate on the low level of insurance for deposits held by customers in banks in India, the central government now plans to raise the cover.

About:

- Currently, in the event of a bank going bust in India, a depositor has claim to a maximum of Rs 1 lakh per account as insurance cover — even if the deposit in their account far exceeds Rs 1 lakh. Depositors holding more than Rs 1 lakh in their account have no legal remedy in case of the collapse of the bank.
- This amount is termed ‘deposit insurance’. The cover of Rs 1 lakh per depositor is provided by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).
- DICGC last revised the deposit insurance cover to Rs 1 lakh on May 1, 1993 — raising it from Rs 30,000, which had been the cover from 1980 onward.

Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC):

- Parent Body: DICGC is a subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Established in: 1978.
- Status: A statutory body established under Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961.
- HQ: Mumbai.
- Administration: Deputy Governor of RBI acts as its Chairman.

- Objective: Providing insurance of deposits and guaranteeing of credit facilities.

Banks insured by DICGC:

- Deposit insurance by DICGC covers all commercial banks, local area banks, regional rural banks and co-operative banks and branches of foreign banks in India.
- Primary cooperative societies, Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and mutual funds are not insured by the DICGC.
- What does the DICGC insure? In the event of a bank failure, DICGC protects bank deposits that are payable in India. The DICGC insures all deposits such as savings, fixed, current, recurring, etc. except the following types of deposits –
 - Deposits of foreign Governments;
 - Deposits of Central/State Governments;
 - Inter-bank deposits;
 - Deposits of the State Land Development Banks with the State co-operative bank;
 - Any amount due on account of any deposit received outside India;
 - Any amount, which has been specifically exempted by the corporation with the previous approval of Reserve Bank of India.
- Maximum deposit amount insured by the DICGC: Each depositor in a bank is insured upto a maximum of Rs.1 Lakh. The coverage under the DICGC was last revised in 1993. Thus, there have been frequent demands for raising this cover which is seen as too small.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Dudhwa National Park

Recently, the elephant safari at Dudhwa National Park was banned, as most of the trained elephants have been deployed in patrolling duties. The other major reason to put restrictions on the safari was the aggressive nature of male elephants which poses a serious threat to the safety of riders.

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

- The Dudhwa Tiger Reserve is a protected area in Uttar Pradesh located on the India-Nepal border.
- It stretches mainly across the Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich districts.
- It comprises of:
 - Dudhwa National Park through which Suheli and Mohana streams flow,
 - Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary through which Sharda River flows, and
 - Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary through which Geruwa River flows.
 - All of these rivers are tributaries of the Ghagra River.
- The Dudhwa National Park has a number of species of birds, reptiles, wild elephants, aquatic animals, one-horned rhinos, wild elephants besides its enriched flora and fauna. Its undisturbed natural forest cover, vast spans of grasslands and wetlands.
- It is the only place in U.P. where both Tigers and Rhinos can be spotted together.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

There are no shortcuts to any place worth going

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: The recent judgement of the Supreme Court that brings the office of Chief Justice of India under the ambit of the Right to Information Act will give a fillip to people's quest for transparency and accountability. Comment

Ans:

Recently, the Supreme Court of India upheld the Delhi High Court judgment of 2010 which stated that the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) would come under the ambit of the Right to Information Act, 2005 (RTI Act), as CJI is a 'public authority' under the RTI Act. It opens the doors for enhanced transparency in the judiciary as earlier higher judiciary in India has been criticized for its opaqueness under the doctrine of judicial independence.

Significance of the Verdict

- **Balancing transparency and judicial independence:** While ruling that the office of the CJI is a public authority, the Supreme Court held that RTI cannot be used as a tool of surveillance and that judicial independence has to be kept in mind while dealing with transparency.
- **Boost to good governance:** As of now judiciary, executive, legislature, all come under the ambit of RTI Act. This will enhance people's trust in the judiciary through increased transparency in governance.
- **Tool to address corruption in judiciary:** Also, the judgement stated that the disclosure of the details of serving judges' personal assets is now not a violation of their right to privacy. This enhances the scope of financial scrutiny of judges by public.

Challenges

- **Lack of clarity:** The SC argued that the right to know under the RTI Act was not absolute and this had to be balanced with the right of privacy of judges. However, the public interest is nowhere defined.
- **Enforcement of the RTI Act in judiciary:** After the recent amendment to the RTI Act, the status (in terms of administrative hierarchy) of Chief Information Commission has been reduced, which was earlier at par with the judges of the High Court. Hence, it would be difficult to penalize judicial officers in case of violation of the law.
- **Administrative burden on judiciary:** The RTI Act, 2005 did not create a new bureaucracy for implementing the law. It tasked and mandated officials in every office for dealing with RTI requests. However, this adds to the administrative burden of the bureaucracy.

Way Forward

- **Need for more transparency:** Further steps should be taken to remove opaqueness about appointments of the judges, made through the collegium system in the SC.
- **Forming a screening committee of RTI Act:** In order to reduce the administrative burden of bureaucracy (pertaining to RTI requests), a screening committee (comprised of civil society members) can be formed, which can weed out frivolous RTI requests.
- **Strengthen RTI:** RTI Act can be strengthened with a strong Whistleblower Protection Act.
- **Expand ambit of RTI:** The SC judgment paves the way for greater transparency. Therefore it is now the turn of other institutions such as registered political parties to be brought under the RTI Act.

Conclusion

- The RTI Act is a strong weapon that enhances accountability, citizen activism and, consequently, participative democracy. In this context, the judgement can give a fillip to people's quest for transparency and accountability.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. With reference to the the Jaccha-Baccha Survey (JABS), consider the following statements:
 1. Less than half of pregnant women in rural India eat nutritious food.
 2. Within the six states, which the survey conducted, Uttar Pradesh performed the worst, while Himachal Pradesh, on average, performed the best.
 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
2. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), consider the following statements:
 1. The PMMVY is targeted only at women delivering their first and second child.
 2. A cash amount of Rs. 6,000 is transferred to the bank account of the beneficiary in three instalments upon meeting certain conditions including early registration of pregnancy, having at least one ante-natal check-up and registration of child birth.
 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. With reference to the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), consider the following statements:
 1. A statutory body established under Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961.
 2. Deputy Governor of RBI acts as its Chairman.
 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
4. Which of the following are the main recommendations of the Company Law Committee-2019, recently seen in news?
 1. Proposing benches of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal
 2. Retention of status-quo in case of the non-compoundable offences
 3. Providing for appeal against the orders of the Regional Directors before the NCLT after due examination
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) **1, 2 and 3**
5. Bilateral Maritime Exercise Za'ir-Al-Bahr (Roar of the Sea), recently seen in news, is between India and which of the following country?
 (a) **Qatar** (b) U.A.E (c) Oman (d) Kuwait
6. With reference to the Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK), consider the following statements:
 1. It aims at reducing malnutrition through a multi-sectoral results-based framework, including agriculture, among women and children across the country.
 2. Ministry of Women and Child Development has collaborated with Google for this project.
 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 the 'Kimberley Process Certification Scheme', consider the following statements:
 1. The Kimberley Process aims to remove conflict diamonds from the global supply chain.
 2. Department of Commerce is the custodian of Kimberley Process Certificates received in India.
 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