

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**National Policy For Treatment of Rare Diseases**

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare published a national policy for treatment of rare diseases, listing 450 diseases as rare but not providing a detailed roadmap on treatment.

About:

- In India, Haemophilia, Thalassemia, Sickle cell anaemia and Primary Immuno Deficiency in children, auto-immune diseases, Lysosomal storage disorders such as Pompe disease and Gaucher's disease are in the rare diseases list.
- The latest policy creates three categories of rare diseases — diseases requiring one-time curative treatment, diseases which need long-term treatment but the cost is low, and diseases that require life-long treatment and the cost is high.
- The policy states that the Centre will provide assistance of Rs 15 lakh to patients suffering from rare diseases that require one-time curative treatment under the Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi scheme. The treatment is limited to beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
- It also recommends crowd funding as a source to fund treatment of rare diseases.
- The policy also intends to kick-start a registry of rare diseases that Indian Council of Medical Research will maintain.

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Classical Languages**

At the recently concluded 93rd edition of the Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan, a resolution was passed demanding the declaration of Marathi as a 'Classical' language.

About:

- Currently, six languages enjoy the 'Classical' status: Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).
- The guidelines for declaring a language as 'Classical' are:
 - High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years;
 - A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers;
 - The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community;
 - The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

Benefits provided once a language is notified as a Classical language:

- Two major annual international awards for scholars of eminence in classical Indian languages.
- A Centre of Excellence for studies in Classical Languages is set up.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) is requested to create, to start with at least in the Central Universities, a certain number of Professional Chairs for the Classical Languages so declared.

Related Info: The Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan, an annual conference of Marathi writers, was started in 1878, and over the years has been headed by leading Marathi intellectuals, including Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade.

GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC**Complex Volcano**

In the Philippines, a volcano called Taal on the island of Luzon, 50 km from Manila, erupted on January 12, spewing lava on the ground, and ash and smoke into the sky.

About:

- Taal is classified as a "complex" volcano.
- A complex volcano, also called a compound volcano, is defined as one that consists of a complex of two or more vents, or a volcano that has an associated volcanic dome, either in its crater or on its flanks. Examples include Vesuvius, besides Taal.
- The Taal volcano does not rise from the ground as a distinct, singular dome but consists of multiple stratovolcanoes (volcanoes susceptible to explosive eruptions), conical hills and craters of all shapes and sizes. Taal has 47 craters and four maars (a broad shallow crater).

Related Info : Because Philippines is situated at the boundaries of two tectonic plates — the Philippines Sea Plate and the Eurasian plate — it is particularly susceptible to earthquakes and volcanism.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

Raisina Dialogue

Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship global conference on geopolitics and geo-economics began in New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the inaugural session.

About:

- The fifth edition of the prestigious event is being jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation.
- The three-day conference will see the participation of 12 Foreign Ministers, including from Russia, Iran, Australia, Maldives, South Africa, Denmark, Uzbekistan and the EU.
- The theme this year is 'Navigating the alpha century'.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Amendment To The SEBI (Listing Obligations And Disclosure Requirements) Regulations**

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has extended the time for listed companies to split the position of chief executive officer (CEO) and managing director (MD) from April 1, 2020 to April 1, 2022.

About:

- As part of the latest amendment to the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, SEBI postponed the deadline for the separation of the MD and CEO roles for the top 500 companies from the earlier stipulated April 1, 2020 to April 1, 2022.
- The SEBI notification stated that with effect from April 1, 2022, the chairperson of any of the top 500 listed entities would be a non-executive director and not be related to the MD or CEO as per the definition of the term "relative" defined under the Companies Act, 2013.
- As many as 160 of the top 500 listed entities are yet to split the MD and the CEO posts, according to data from Prime Database.
- This assumes significance as some of the biggest names of India Inc. had sought a relief in terms of postponing the deadline to comply with the norm notified in May 2018.
- Industry had various concerns in implementation, including seeking a clear regulatory demarcation on the role and responsibility under the Companies Act, 2013 and SEBI's Listing Regulations for chairman and managing director.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**World Future Energy Summit**

The World Future Energy Summit began in Abu Dhabi. The theme for this year's summit is "Rethinking Global Consumption, Production, and Investment."

About:

- World Future Energy Summit is the Middle East's largest future energy and sustainability event.
- It is held annually at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre under the patronage of Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces.
- The 2020 edition includes exhibition and forum programmes across five main pillars: energy, solar, water, waste and smart cities.
- Also held alongside the World Future Energy Summit are the Climate Innovations Exchange (CLIX) for short and the Future Sustainability Summit.

Galápagos Giant Tortoise

The Galapagos National Park called off the Giant Tortoise Restoration Initiative (GTRI), a captive breeding programme of the National Park as the tortoise population has gone up from 15 to 2,000.

About:

- Common Name: Galápagos Tortoise
- Scientific Name: Chelonoidis nigra
- Distribution: The Galápagos tortoises are native to seven of the Galápagos Islands, part of Ecuador, located about 1,000 km west of the Ecuadorian mainland.
- Average Life Span: With lifespans in the wild of over 100 years, it is one of the longest-lived vertebrates.
- Weight: They are the largest living species of tortoise. Modern Galápagos tortoises can weigh up to 417 kg.
- IUCN Red List Status: Vulnerable.
- It is listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT**Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD)**

The Government of India launched Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD).

About:

- It is a central accident database management system that will help in analysing causes of road crashes and in devising safety interventions to reduce such accidents in the country.
- Bodies involved: This IT tool has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) and will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre. The project costs ₹ 258 crore and is being supported by the World Bank.
- Coverage: The system will be first piloted in the six States with highest fatalities from road crashes — Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Way ahead: The IRAD will be improved on the basis of the learnings from the trial, following which it will be rolled out across the country.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Is it a good idea to privatise even the profit-making public sector enterprises? Give reasons in support of your answer.

Ans:

Recently there has been a change in disinvestment policy for CPSEs, allowing for strategic disinvestment in profit-making CPSEs like BPCL, Shipping Corporation of India, Container Corporation of India, some of which have Navratna status.

Good Idea

- LPG reforms: Over the years, keeping in line of LPG reforms, disinvestment targets have been raised so as to allow private players more space for investment e.g. FY 2010-11 target was 40000 crore while in FY 2019-20 it is 90000 crore.
- To plug fiscal deficit: Necessity to fulfil targets of FRBM Act, which itself have been comprehensively reviewed in 2016 due to regular slippages.
 - New Targets: Fiscal Deficit by FY2020-21 2.8% and 2.5% by 2023
 - Though there have been declining fiscal deficit from over 5% in 2012-13 to 3.4% in 2018-19, challenges remain in face of welfare role of state e.g. PM-KISAN scheme.
- To ensure the attractiveness of PSEs for the private sector: To achieve objectives of bringing down shareholding by the government to less than 51% along with the attractiveness of such profit-making CPSEs will help overcome challenges faced in loss-making CPSE's privatization, such as Air India.

Not a Good Idea

- Against values and objectives of LPG reforms: a profit-making PSU is able to show professionalism, higher productivity, able to compete in the domestic and global market along with meeting welfare objective doesn't need further privatization (a private entity will have only one aim of profit-making).
- Need for short-term liquidity (meeting FRBM target etc.) should not compromise stable long term macro-economic structural adjustment. E.g. there is a need to enhance revenue from tax collections and rationalise subsidies. This route also disincentivises the government in ensuring targets of the fiscal deficit are met.
- Global level corporations like China's PetroChina have state support and are profit-making. CPSEs in India can be developed on such a line in strategic areas like energy, shipping etc.

Way Forward

- Thus, such privatization should not compromise long-term socio-economic considerations. Even if it is done, at the most, some stakes should be diluted rather than going for full-scale privatization that too on level playing and rule-based regime.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. With reference to the complex volcano, consider the following statements:
 1. Taal volcano in Philippines is classified as a "complex" volcano.
 2. A complex volcano, also called a compound volcano, is defined as one that consists of a complex of two or more vents, or a volcano that has an associated volcanic dome, either in its crater or on its flanks.

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. Which of the following languages enjoy the 'Classical' status in India?
1. Tamil
 2. Sanskrit
 3. Malayalam
 4. Hindi
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 and 4 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3 only
3. With reference to the World Future Energy Summit, consider the following statements:
1. It is held annually in Doha, Qatar.
 2. The theme for this year's summit is "Rethinking Global Consumption, Production, and Investment".
- 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. With reference to the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirement) (Amendment) Regulations, consider the following statements:
1. Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently extended the time for listed companies to split the position of chief executive officer (CEO) and managing director (MD) from April 1, 2020 to April 1, 2022.
 2. The chairperson of any of the top 500 listed entities would be a non-executive director and not be related to the MD or CEO as per the definition of the term "relative" defined under the Companies Act, 2013.
- 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 Raisina Dialogue, consider the following statements:
1. The fifth edition of the prestigious event is being organized by the Vivekananda International Foundation.
 2. The theme this year is 'Navigating the alpha century'.
- 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 Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD), consider the following statements:
1. It is a central accident database management system that will help in analysing causes of road crashes and in devising safety interventions to reduce such accidents in the country.
 2. It tool has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) and will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre.
- 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