

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC****International Widows Day**

International Widows Day is being observed on 23 June.

**About:**

- The United Nations observes 23 June as International Widows Day (resolution A/RES/65/189) since 2011, to draw attention to the voices and experiences of widows and to galvanize the unique support that they need.
- There are an estimated 258 million widows around the world, and nearly one in ten live in extreme poverty.

**Welfare Scheme for Widows in India**

- The Ministry of Rural Development is implementing Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) under which Pension Scheme for Widows as well as Pension Scheme for the Elderly below poverty line are operated.
- A Home for Widows has been set up in Vrindavan, UP with a capacity of 1000 inmates to provide widows a safe and secure place of stay, health services, nutritious food, legal and counseling services.
- The Ministry of Defence provides financial assistance for vocational training of widows of ex-servicemen, treatment of serious diseases of non-pensioner ex-servicemen/widows and daughter's marriage/widows' remarriage.

**R&D Portal for Mining: SATYABHAMA**

The Ministry of Mines has launched a portal "SATYABHAMA (Science and Technology Yojana for Atmanirbhar Bharat in Mining Advancement)" with an aim to promote research and development in the mining and minerals sector.

**Key Points**

- The Portal has been launched to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the Science and Technology Programme Scheme.
  - Under the Science and Technology Programme Scheme, the Ministry of Mines promotes research in applied geosciences, mineral exploration, mining and allied areas, mineral processing, optimum utilization and conservation of the mineral resources of the country.
  - The Ministry of Mines provides funds to Academic institutions, universities, national institutes and R&D institutions recognized with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (under the Ministry of Science & Technology) for implementing R&D projects.
- This portal will allow online submission of project proposals along with monitoring of the same and utilisation of funds.
- The portal has been designed, developed and implemented by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The portal is also integrated with NGO Darpan Portal of NITI Aayog.
  - NGO-DARPAN is a platform that provides space for interface between Non-Government organizations (NGOs)/Voluntary Organizations (VOs) in the country and key Government Ministries/Departments/Government Bodies.
  - it is an e-governance application offered by NITI Aayog to electronically maintain data and transparency regarding NGOs/VOs in the country.
  - The NGO-DARPAN was earlier maintained by erstwhile Planning Commission, which has been replaced by the NITI Aayog w.e.f. 1st January, 2015.

**INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY****Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra**

The Supreme Court lifted its June 18 ban on the conduct of Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra after ensuring a complete lack of public attendance for the festival to avoid spread of infection amid the pandemic.

**About:**

- Location: Ratha Yatra is a Hindu festival associated with Lord Jagannath held at Puri in Odisha.
- Origin: It is regarded as the oldest Ratha Yatra taking place in India whose descriptions can be found in Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, and Skanda Purana and Kapila Samhita.
- When: This annual festival is celebrated on Ashadha Shukla Paksha Dwitiya (second day in bright fortnight of Ashadha month).
- Objective: The festival commemorates Jagannath's annual visit to Gundicha Temple via Mausī Maa Temple (aunt's home) near Balagandī Chaka, Puri.

**Festival highlights:**

- As part of Ratha Yatra, the deities of Jagannath, his elder brother Balabhadra and younger sister Subhadra are taken out in a procession to Gundicha Temple, which is situated at a distance of 2-3 km from their temple.
- The deities remain there for nine days.
- Then the deities or Ratha Yatra return to the Main temple. The return journey of Puri Jagannath Ratha Jatra is known as Bahuda Jatra.
- Three richly decorated chariots, resembling temple structures, are pulled by devotees through the streets of Puri who consider this as an auspicious deed.

**Variyankunna Kunjahammed Haji**

Variyankunna (2021), a new movie based on the life of Variyankunna Kunjahammed Haji is set to begin shooting in early 2021, the 100th anniversary of the Malabar revolt.

**About:**

- Variyankunna Kunjahammed Haji (1877 – 1922) was an Indian Muslim and the leader of Malabar Rebellion of 1921.
- He raised 75000 natives, seized control of large territory from the British rule and setup a parallel government, in open defiance of British rulers, for more than six months in most parts of the then Eranadu and Valluvanadu taluks of Kerala.
- In January 1922, under the guise of a treaty, the British betrayed Haji through his close friend Unyan Musaliyar, arresting him from his hideout and producing him before a British judge. He was sentenced to death along with his compatriots.

**GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC****Earthquakes and Delhi-NCR**

Recently, the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) has observed that the recent series of tremors in the National Capital Region-Delhi (Delhi-NCR) are not unusual and are indicative of strain energy build up in the region.

**Key Points**

- An earthquake cannot be predicted and the tremors cannot be described as warnings for a big event but the possibility of a stronger and life threatening earthquake cannot be ruled out.
- The vulnerability of a region can be understood from the past seismicity, calculation of strain budget, mapping of active faults etc.
  - Sometimes, a vulnerable zone remains quiet, experiences small magnitude earthquakes that do not indicate any bigger earthquake or receives a sudden jolt by a big earthquake without any call.
- The Delhi-NCR has been identified as the second highest seismic hazard zone (Zone IV) but the recent events in Delhi-NCR cannot be defined as the foreshocks.
  - Foreshocks: All small tremors before a major earthquake in a particular region are categorized as foreshocks.
  - Scientifically all these tremors in the Delhi-NCR can be demarcated as the foreshocks only after a big earthquake takes place immediately.

**Reasons for Earthquakes in Delhi-NCR**

- Release of Energy: Release of strain energy through the weak zones or faults which accumulates as a result of northward movement of Indian plate and its collision with the Eurasian plate.

- Movement of Plates: The Himalayan seismic belt is the region where the Indian plate collided with the Eurasian plate and under-thrusted beneath the Himalayan wedge.
- Proximity to Himalayas: Delhi-NCR is not very far from the entire north-west and north-east Himalayan belt lies in the highest seismic potential zone V and IV, where major to great earthquakes can take place.

### **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**

#### **United Nations Public Service Day**

UN Public Service Day 2020 is being observed on June 23 to honour public servants in the COVID-19 pandemic response.

##### About:

- On 20 December 2002, the General Assembly designated 23 June as Public Service Day by adopting resolution 57/277.
- UN Public Service Day highlights the contribution of public service in the development process and recognizes the work of public servants.
- The prestigious UN Public Service Awards (UNPSA) are given away on this day by the United Nations Economic and Social Council for contributions made to the cause of enhancing the role, prestige, and visibility of public service.
- The day also marks the anniversary of the date when the International Labour Organization adopted the Convention on Labour Relations (Public Service), 1978 (No. 151). This Convention is a framework for determining working conditions of all civil servants across the world.

#### **Eurasian Group On Combating Money Laundering And Financing Of Terrorism (EAG)**

Indian officials attended the 32nd special Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG) plenary meeting, under the aegis of the Financial Action Task Force. The meeting was held online.

##### About:

- The Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and financing of terrorism is an FATF-style regional body.
- The EAG was established in 2004 and is currently an associate member of the FATF.
- The primary goal of the EAG is to assist member-states in implementing the 40 FATF anti-money laundering Recommendations and the 9 Special FATF Recommendations on combating terrorist financing (FATF 40 9 Recommendations).
- The EAG comprises nine countries: India, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus.

### **ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**

#### **Decarbonising Transport In India**

NITI Aayog in collaboration with International Transport Forum (ITF) will launch the “Decarbonising Transport in India” project on 24 June, with the intention to develop a pathway towards a low-carbon transport system for India.

##### About:

- The “Decarbonising Transport in India” project will design a tailor-made transport emissions assessment framework for India.
- It will provide the government with a detailed understanding of current and future transport activity and the related CO2 emissions as a basis for their decision-making.

#### **Decarbonising Transport in Emerging Economies (DTEE)**

- It is part of the “Decarbonising Transport in Emerging Economies” (DTEE) family of projects, which supports transport decarbonisation across different world regions. India, Argentina, Azerbaijan, and Morocco are current participants.
- The DTEE is a collaboration between the ITF and the Wuppertal Institute, supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

**International Transport Forum (ITF)**

- The International Transport Forum at the OECD is an intergovernmental organisation with 60 member countries.
- It acts as a think tank for transport policy and organises the Annual Summit of transport ministers. ITF is the only global body that covers all transport modes.
- The ITF is administratively integrated with the OECD, yet politically autonomous.
- India has been a member of ITF since 2008.

**Macaws**

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has busted a wildlife smuggling syndicate with seizure of a consignment of exotic macaws which had been smuggled from Bangladesh to Kolkata. The exotic birds were identified as Hyacinth macaw, Pesquet's parrot, Severe macaw and Hahn's macaw.

**About:**

- Common Name: Macaws.
- Scientific Name: Psittacidae.
- Family: Macaws are beautiful, brilliantly colored members of the parrot family.
- Distribution: Macaws are native to Central America and North America (only Mexico), South America, and formerly the Caribbean. Most species are associated with forests, especially rainforests, but others prefer woodland or savannah-like habitats.
- Species: There are at least 17 species of macaws, and several are endangered. The glaucous macaw and Spix's macaw may already be extinct in the wild.
- Conservation: The macaws are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), with Hyacinth macaw being accorded the highest protection.

**Presena Glacier Covered with Tarps**

Giant sheets of tarpaulin (tarps) are being used to cover Presena glacier in northern Italy to slow melting caused by global warming. It is a part of the conservation project (undertaken by Italian firm Carosello-Tonale) which was launched in 2008 — at that point only 30,000 sq metres of the glacier was covered.

**Key Points**

- Covering of the Glacier:
  - Tarpaulin sheets (tarps) are being laid over 1,00,000 sq metres of the Presena glacier.
  - Rs. 34,091 tarpaulin sheets will be sewn together once they are stretched over the snow to keep warm air out. Bags of sand are used to weigh them down.
  - This six-week process is repeated every year once the ski season is over and summer begins in full force.
  - A ski season is a period when skiing, snowboarding and other alpine sports are viable in an alpine resort.
  - The process of removing the protective tarps will begin in September, and will take six months.
- Tarpaulin Sheets:
  - Tarpaulin is a large sheet of strong, flexible and water-resistant material, often coated and made of plastics such as polyethylene.
  - Geotextile tarpaulins reflect sunlight, maintain a temperature lower than the external one, and thus preserve as much snow as possible.
  - There are similar glacier cover systems on a few Austrian glaciers, but the surface covered by the tarpaulins is much smaller.
- Concern:
  - Since 1993, the Presena glacier has lost more than one third of its volume.
  - The area is continuously shrinking, so the efforts are made towards covering the area as much as possible.

**INTERNAL SECURITY, DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

**National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF)**

The Finance Ministry has given approval to a proposal to allow individuals and institutions to contribute directly to the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF).

**About:**

- This is a significant development at a time when many have expressed concerns about donations sent to the PM CARES Fund or the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, as both claim they are not public authorities subject to questions under the Right to Information Act.
- The NDRF was set up in accordance with Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- It is meant to "meet the expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation" for any disaster situation.
- Although Section 46 includes a clause for grants made by any person or institution, provisions for such donations had not been made.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Q. "India has made phenomenal progress in access and availability of health services, since independence". Identify the bottlenecks in health service delivery and suggest solutions.**

**Answer:**

Basic health infrastructure in the form of primary, secondary and tertiary health care services, improved a lot in India since independence. It is reflected in its increased number of hospitals and dispensaries, doctors, health care workers, testing laboratories etc.

India's phenomenal success in the health services can be gauged by looking at various milestones achieved in the last 70 odd years.

Indicators such as Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR-around 140 per 1 lakh in 2020), Infant mortality rate (IMR - 183 in 1951 to 32 per 1000 in 2020), life expectancy (33 years in 1951 and ~70 in 2020) have shown a big improvement.

India got success in controlling communicable diseases like Malaria, Tuberculosis, Smallpox, leprosy, polio and AIDS etc. to a vast extent.

A near universal immunisation of mothers and children has been achieved.

**Bottlenecks pervading the india's health service delivery:**

- Gaps in healthcare infrastructure: To provide universal access of health care we need to fulfill the health infrastructure gaps.
  - Even if private healthcare caters to around 70% of India's population there are still very low levels of health care facilities- eg. 1.3 hospital beds per 1,000 people in the country.
- Inadequate Public Funding: Public health expenditure is still very low in India, at just little more than one percent of GDP.
- High out-of-pocket expenses: Poverty is the real issue in India where three fourths of the population live below or at subsistence levels.
  - In such a situation over 80 per cent of ambulatory care is supported through out-of-pocket expenses. And many of the people fall into poverty and debt.
- Acute shortage of skilled personnel: Due to double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, India will be requiring around twice the number of doctors, triple the number of nurses and quadruple the number of paramedic and support staff.
  - However, we are still far behind the WHO benchmark (1 doctor/1000) and currently have about 0.65 doctors and 1.3 nurses per 1,000 people in the country.
- Some other bottlenecks: Non-availability of drugs, lack of advanced laboratory facilities and equipment, a severely constrained health workforce along with poor delivery mechanism for health care are also bottlenecks of Indian healthcare system.

**Some steps to be taken to remove these bottlenecks:**

- Universal Health Coverage (UHC): The UHC in its simplest definition means access to quality, effective and affordable health services for all, without imposing financial burden.



- The government should institutionalize UHC as a way to remove barriers to good health and expand access to quality, affordable care.
- In the UHC model, all citizens should be entitled to a comprehensive package of healthcare services, and have access to public health and accredited private facilities for attaining services such as diagnostics, medicine, vaccines or surgeries as an entitlement, without having to pay at the point of use.
- Strengthening primary health care: Primary health care should be prioritized, since it is the greatest need of the vast majority and, if effectively delivered, will substantially reduce the demand for secondary and tertiary care.
  - Achieving a target of Ayushman Bharat to establish some 1.5 crore Health and wellness Centre (HWC) should be a priority.
- More emphasis on evidence based public health policy and health research: In India, health research activities do not match with public health priorities, which is necessary for better health outcomes.
- More spending on health: Public health financing is pivotal to provide financial entitlement in terms of purchase of services so that the out-of-pocket expenditure is taken care of.
  - It is also needed for creating better infrastructure, expansion of health workforce and provision of essential drugs free of cost.
  - In this context, National Health Policy 2017 proposes a government expenditure of 2.5% of by 2025. This should become a reality.
- Human resource for health: Increasing human resources in the health system is very critical. A national human resource institute for health may be set up for addressing all issues comprehensively in terms of policy guidance and mechanisms.
  - A comprehensive national policy for human resources is essential to achieve universal health care in India.

### Conclusion

- The priorities should be changed taking into consideration the health problems affecting the marginalized people and the vulnerable sections of the society.
- The situation demands concerted action from the national and state governments, civil society organizations, People's Health Movements and other concerned groups and movements to radically alter the way the health services are organized and funded.