

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Annual TB Report 2020**

Union Minister for Health released the annual TB Report 2020. He also released a Joint Monitoring Mission (JMM) report, a manual on Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to TB patients under NIKSHAY system, a Training Module, and the quarterly newsletter NIKSHAY Patrika.

The key achievements listed in the Report include:

- Around 24.04 Lakh TB patients have been notified in 2019. This amounts to a 14% increase in TB notification as compared to the year 2018.
- Achieving near-complete on-line notification of TB patients through the NIKSHAY system.
- Private sector notifications increased by 35% with 6.78 lakh TB patients notified.
- Due to easy availability of molecular diagnostics, the proportion of children diagnosed with TB increased to 8% in 2019 compared to 6% in 2018.
- Provision of HIV testing for all notified TB patients increased from 67% in 2018 to 81% in 2019.
- Expansion of treatment services has resulted in a 12% improvement in the treatment success rate of notified patients. For 2019 it is 81% compared to 69% in 2018.
- NIKSHAY also expanded the provision of four Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) schemes of the programme including of Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) to TB patients.

Ranking of states

- For the first time Central TB Division (CTD) introduced a quarterly ranking on TB elimination efforts by all the states and UTs.
- In the categories of larger states with more than 50 lakh population, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh were awarded as best performing States.
- In the category of smaller states with less than 50 lakh population, Tripura and Nagaland were awarded.
- In the category of Union Territory, Dadara and Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu were chosen as the best performers.

GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC**Lightning**

A World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) committee of experts said two new world records for the longest reported distance and the longest reported duration for a single lightning flash were set in Brazil and Argentina.

About:

- A single Lightning flash stretched more than 700 kilometres across Brazil on October 31 last year has created a new world record for the longest reported distance of lightning. This was equivalent to the distance between Boston and Washington in the US, or between London and Basel in Switzerland.
- A lightning flash that developed continuously over northern Argentina on March 4, 2019 lasted a whopping 16.73 seconds creating new world record for the longest reported duration of lightning.
- The new records for extreme lightning bursts, or 'megaflashes', during 2019, are more than double the size and duration of the previous record flashes.
- The new record-breaking strikes were released on the occasion of International Lightning Safety Day on June 28.

30-30 rule

- The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reiterated the dangers of lightning.
- The official advice from the agency is to follow the 30-30 rule: if the time between flash and thunder is less than 30 seconds, stay inside, and wait 30 minutes after the last observed flash, to resume outdoor activities.

Monsoon

The monsoon covered the whole of India, 12 days before the normal date of July 8, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. This was the fastest progression of the rain-bearing system since 2013.

About:

- The formation of a low pressure area over Bay of Bengal which moved west-northwest-wards and another cyclonic circulation over central India helped in advance of the current Monsoon season.
- In the recent past, such early coverage of southwest Monsoon over the entire country occurred in 2013 when it had covered extreme north-western part of India on June 16 – almost a month ahead of then normal date of July 15.

Related Info :

- As per the revised normal arrival dates, released last month by the IMD, the monsoon sets over Kerala around June 1, nearly same as the old normal date and covers the entire country by July 8 — one week before the old normal date (July 15).
- Under revised reference dates for withdrawal, Monsoon withdrawal from northwest India will be delayed by more than two weeks (September 17) compared to the old normal date (September 1).
- While the normal dates of onset are revised based on data during 1961-2019, dates of withdrawal are revised based on data during 1971-2019. The old normal monsoon onset and withdrawal dates were based on data during 1901-1940.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Commission on sub-categorization of OBCs**

The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the term of the Commission constituted under Article 340 of the constitution to examine the issue of Sub-categorization within Other Backward Classes in the Central List, by 6 months i.e. upto 31.1.2021.

About:

- Background: The Commission was constituted under article 340 of the Constitution with the approval of President in 2017. The Commission is headed by Justice (Retd.) Smt. G. Rohini.
- Expenditure: The expenditure related to the administration costs of the Commission would be borne by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Benefits: The Communities in the existing list of OBCs which have not been able to get any major benefit of the scheme of reservation for OBCs for appointment in Central Government posts and for admission in Central Government Educational Institutions are expected to be benefitted upon implementation of the recommendations of the Commission.

P.V. Narasimha Rao

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu paid tributes to former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao on his birth anniversary (June 28, 2020).

About:

- Pamulaparthy Venkata Narasimha Rao (1921 –2004) was a politician who served as the 9th Prime Minister of India from 1991 to 1996. He also became the Chief minister of Andhra Pradesh in 1971.
- Father of Economic reforms: He sought to dismantle the License Raj system, reduce red tape and make Indian industries more competitive. He laid the foundation for trade liberalization and re-integration of Indian economy with the global economy, especially East Asian economies.
- Foreign policy: Among his bold moves in foreign policy were establishing diplomatic relations with Israel and reversing decades of frosty relations between India and the United States by bringing them together. He also launched the Look East policy.
- Father of Indian nuclear Program: He energised the national nuclear security and ballistic missiles program, which ultimately resulted in the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests by Vajpayee-led NDA government (the tests were planned in 1996 but they were not carried out as government at centre got changed due to 1996 general election).
- National Security: He was also fairly successful in controlling the separatist movements in Punjab and Kashmir.
- Local governance: The path-breaking 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments empowering local bodies during Narasimha Rao's tenure as the Prime Minister are worthy of mentioning.
- Babri Mosque riots: Rao's term also saw the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh when BJP's Kalyan Singh was Chief Minister, which triggered one of the worst Hindu-Muslim riots in the country since its independence.

- He was also referred to as Chanakya for his ability to steer economic and political legislation through the parliament at a time when he headed a minority government.

Article 371A

In a letter to Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi has said the constitutionally established State government was being challenged on a day-to-day basis by armed gangs who question the integrity and sovereignty of the nation.

About:

- The Governor said he could no longer abstain from constitutional obligations and proposed that under Article 371A (1) (b) of the Constitution, important functions like “transfer and posting of officials” entrusted with the maintenance of law and order of and above the district level will be with the approval of the Governor.
- Articles 369 through 392 (including some that have been removed) appear in Part XXI of the Constitution, titled ‘Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions’.
- Article 370 dealt with ‘Temporary Provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir’.
- Articles 371, 371A, 371B, 371C, 371D, 371E, 371F, 371G, 371H, and 371J define special provisions with regard to another state (or states).
- Articles 370 and 371 were part of the Constitution at the time of its commencement on January 26, 1950; Articles 371A through 371J were incorporated subsequently.
- Article 371A (13th Amendment Act, 1962), Nagaland says “Parliament cannot legislate in matters of Naga religion or social practices, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice according to Naga customary law, and ownership and transfer of land without concurrence of the state Assembly.”

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.

Atma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Yojana

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Atma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Yojana' for migrant workers.

About:

- Atma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Abhiyan is focused on generating employment for those migrant workers of Uttar Pradesh who recently returned from other states.
- The programme is focused towards providing employment, promoting local entrepreneurship and creating partnership with Industrial associations to provide employment opportunities.
- Under the campaign, around 1.25 crore people will be provided employment in the state in different schemes of central and state government.
- The campaign is launched in 31 districts of the state. Villages across districts of state will join this program through the Common Service Centers and Krishi Vigyan Kendras.

Nasha Mukht Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21)

Nasha Mukht Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21) for 272 Most Affected Districts was e-launched by Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment on the occasion of “International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking”.

About:

- The Nasha Mukht Bharat Annual Action Plan for 2020-21 would focus on 272 most affected districts and launch a three-pronged attack combining efforts of Narcotics Bureau, Outreach/Awareness by Social Justice and Treatment through the Health Dept.
- The Action Plan has the following components: Awareness generation programmes; Focus on Higher Educational institutions, University Campuses and Schools; Community outreach and identification of dependent population; Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital settings; and Capacity Building Programmes for Service Provider.

Related Info :

- The Ministry has also prepared a National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction for the period 2018-2025 which aims at reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse through a multi-pronged strategy involving education, de-addiction and rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families.

IAS Civil List

Union Minister for Personnel Jitendra Singh launched the IAS Civil List 2020 and its e-version.

About:

- The dynamic list will help in selecting right officer for the right assignment based on available profile and is a vital source of information on the officers manning various posts for the general public.
- This is 65th edition of IAS Civil List and the 2nd e-Civil list with photographs of the IAS officers of all the State Cadres. The List also contains the information of IAS as per batch, cadre state, present posting, pay and allowances, education and superannuation.
- The Minister said that the proposal for establishment of a National Recruitment Agency (NRA) is at an advanced stage. The NRA will conduct computer based online Common Eligibility Test for recruitment to non-gazetted posts with test centres in every district.

Scheme For Promotion Of Academic And Research Collaboration (SPARC)

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) are collaborating with their counterparts in Germany to develop new materials for green energy solutions.

About:

- The project, taken up under the Scheme for Promotion of academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC), aims at developing alternative technologies to produce green hydrogen in anticipation of transition to hydrogen-based economy.
- conventional methods of generating hydrogen result in a large quantity of carbon dioxide. Whereas electrochemical splitting of water, called 'Water Electrolysis' (WE), is clean, facile, and highly efficient technology for large-scale production of high-purity H₂.

Related Info :

- SPARC is an initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- It aims at improving the research ecosystem of India's Higher Educational Institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world from 28 selected nations to jointly solve problems of national and/or international relevance.

Space Sector Reforms

Union Cabinet approved far reaching reforms in the Space sector aimed at boosting private sector participation in the entire range of space activities.

About:

- The newly created Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) will provide a level playing field for private companies to use Indian space infrastructure. It will also hand-hold, promote and guide the private industries in space activities through encouraging policies and a friendly regulatory environment.
- The Public Sector Enterprise 'New Space India Limited (NSIL)' will endeavour to re-orient space activities from a 'supply driven' model to a 'demand driven' model, thereby ensuring optimum utilization of our space assets.
- These reforms will allow ISRO to focus more on research and development activities, new technologies, exploration missions and human spaceflight programme.
- Some of the planetary exploration missions will also be opened up to private sector through an 'announcement of opportunity' mechanism.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**RIC Trilateral Grouping**

Recently, a special Russia-India-China- RIC trilateral Foreign Minister's Video Conference was organized to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the conclusion of the Second World War.

About:

- RIC as a strategic grouping first took shape in the late 1990s under the leadership of Yevgeny Primakov as "a counterbalance to the Western alliance."
- Primakov, a Russian politician and diplomat who was also the prime minister of Russia from 1998 to 1999, is credited with the idea for RIC.
- The group was founded for renewing old ties with India and fostering the newly discovered friendship with China.

Anthropause

Researchers in the UK are set to study the “anthropause”, a term they have coined to refer to the coronavirus-induced lockdown period and its impact on other species.

About:

- Researchers have suggested that the lockdown period, which is also being referred to as the “Great Pause”, be referred to with a more precise term. So they have proposed ‘anthropause’ to refer specifically to a considerable global slowing of modern human activities, notably travel.
- Reduction in human activity during the coronavirus lockdown on both land and sea has been “unparalleled” in recent history. The unprecedented curbs imposed on millions of people around the world, mainly due to restrictions in travel, led to reports of unusual animal behaviour.
- For instance, there were pumas sighted in Chile’s Santiago, jackals in the parks of Tel Aviv in Israel, dolphins in the waters of Italy and even a monkey fight on the streets of Thailand.
- The researchers believe studying this period will provide valuable insights into the relationship between human-wildlife interactions in the 21st century.

Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020

President Ram Nath Kovind has promulgated the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 in pursuance of the commitment to ensure safety of depositors across banks.

About:

- The Ordinance amends the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 as applicable to Cooperative Banks.
- It seeks to protect the interests of depositors and strengthen cooperative banks by improving governance and oversight by extending powers already available with RBI in respect of other banks to Co-operative Banks.
- The amendments do not affect existing powers of the State Registrars of Co-operative Societies under state co-operative laws.
- The amendments do not apply to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) or co-operative societies whose primary object and principal business is long-term finance for agricultural development.
- The Ordinance also amends Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act to enable making of a scheme of reconstruction or amalgamation of a banking company for protecting the interest of the public, depositors and the banking system and for securing its proper management, even without making an order of moratorium, so as to avoid disruption of the financial system.

Global Education Monitoring Report 2020

UNESCO has released the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report.

Key Findings:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in education systems across the world.
- About 40% of low- and lower-middle-income countries have not supported learners at risk of exclusion during this crisis, such as the poor, linguistic minorities and learners with disabilities.
- As substitutes for classroom instruction, while many poorer countries opted for radio and television lessons, 55% of low-income, 73% of lower-middle-income and 93% of upper-middle-income countries adopted for online learning platforms for primary and secondary education.
- School closures also interrupted support mechanisms from which many disadvantaged learners benefit. For poor students who depend on school for free meals or even free sanitary napkins, closures have been a major blow. Higher drop-out rates are also a concern.
- In order to combat the situation, 17% of low and middle-income countries are planning to recruit more teachers, 22% to increase class time and 68% to introduce remedial classes when schools reopen.

“Money Laundering And The Illegal Wildlife Trade” Report

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) released its first global report on the illegal wildlife trade titled the “Money Laundering and the Illegal Wildlife Trade” report.

Key findings:

- Illegal wildlife trade is a “global threat”, which also has links with other organised crimes such as modern slavery, drug trafficking and arms trade.
- The illegal trade is estimated to generate revenues of up to \$23 billion a year.

- During the study, 22 of the 45 respondent countries considered themselves as source for wildlife crime, 18 as transit countries and 14 as destination countries. All but nine reported to be impacted by the risks from financial flows linked to the trade.
- Criminals are frequently misusing the legitimate wildlife trade, as well as other import-export type businesses, as a front to move and hide illegal proceeds from wildlife crimes.
- Jurisdictions should consider implementing the good practices. The report noted that in 2012, India amended the Prevention of Money Laundering Act removing a value threshold — of ₹30 lakh and above — that was earlier applicable to the wildlife trade predicates.

Related Info :

According to the 2016 UN World Wildlife Crime report, criminals are illegally trading products derived from over 7,000 species of wild animals and plants across the world.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Statistics Day

Statistics Day of India is being celebrated on June 29, 2020 on the birth anniversary of Prof. P C Mahalanobis. This year's Theme is "SDG- 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) & SDG- 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)".

Contribution of PC Mahalanobis to Statistics:

- PC Mahalanobis (1893 –1972) was an Indian scientist and applied statistician. He is referred to as the chief architect of Indian statistical system as well as father of statistical science in India.
- He established the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in 1931 in Kolkata. The institute founded the journal Sankhya, along the lines of Karl Pearson's Biometrika. In 1959 it was made an autonomous body of Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. Post-independence, he helped in the establishment of Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the National Sample Survey (NSS) and the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI).
- His most important contributions are related to Large-Scale Sample Surveys. He introduced three key concepts to the theory and practice of sample surveys which are: Pilot surveys, Optimum survey design and Inter Penetrating Network of sub-samples technique (IPNS)
- He also advocated the usefulness of sampling methods. He was elected Chairman of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling in 1947, and held this post until 1951.
- In 1936 he introduced a statistical measure named the Mahalanobis distance. It is widely used in cluster analysis and classification techniques.
- In 1926, he analysed 60 years' data related to floods in Orissa, which led to the construction, after three decades, of the Hirakud dam on the Mahanadi.
- He was one of the members of the first Planning commission of free India. The Mahalanobis model, was employed in the Second Five Year Plan, which worked towards the rapid industrialisation of India.

Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis National Award in Official Statistics

- In 2019, the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) instituted a new award, namely, the Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis National Award in Official statistics for recognizing outstanding achievement of official statisticians in Central Government, State Governments and Institutions.
- The award will be given on Statistics Day.

National Productivity Council (NPC)

The 49th Governing Council Meeting of National Productivity Council (NPC) was held under the Chairmanship of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

About:

- Parent body: NPC is an autonomous body under Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.
- Objective: NPC is a national level organization to promote productivity culture in India.
- Established in: 1958.
- Status: It is an autonomous, multipartite, non-profit organization and has been registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.
- NPC is a constituent of the Tokyo-based Asian Productivity Organisation (APO), an Inter-Governmental Body, of which the Government of India is a founder member.

International Msme Day

The international Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Day is being observed on 27 June under the theme “COVID-19: The Great Lockdown and its impact on Small Business.”

About:

- The UN General Assembly in its 74th Plenary held on the 6th April, 2017 declared 27th June as Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day.
- Objective of the day is to recognize the importance of MSMEs in achieving sustainable development goals and in promoting innovation, creativity and sustainable work for all.

How they contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- SDG targets 8.3 and 9.3 call for enhancing the access of SMEs to financial services.
- In addition, SMEs are an important element in the implementation of SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure).

Consolidated Notification For Classification And Registration MSMES

Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has come out with a consolidated notification in the form of guidelines for classification and registration of MSMES.

About:

- This notification supersedes all earlier notifications issued with regard to classification or registration of MSMES. Now, the entrepreneurs, enterprises and the MSMEs have to refer to just this notification for matters relating with classification or registration.
- As per the notification, an MSME will be known as Udyam, as this is more closer to the word Enterprise and accordingly, the registration process will be known as Udyam Registration.
- It can be filled online based on self-declaration with no requirement to upload documents, papers, certificates or proof. An enterprise can be registered just on the basis of Aadhaar number.
- Investment in ‘Plant and Machinery or Equipment’ and ‘Turnover’ are the basic criteria for classification of MSMEs now.
- Exports of goods or services or both shall be excluded while calculating the turnover of any enterprise whether Micro, Small or Medium.
- In another first, the Ministry of MSME has established a strong facilitation mechanism for the MSMEs. This process is in the form of Single Window Systems at the district level and regional level.
- Similarly, Ministry’s recent initiative of Champions Control Rooms across the country have been made legally responsible for facilitating such Entrepreneurs in registration and even thereafter

Indian Money In Swiss Banks Falls 5.8%

The latest data from Zurich-based Swiss National Bank (SNB) released for the year 2019 shows that the Money parked by Indians in Swiss Banks fell for the second straight year — this time by CHF 55 million, or 5.8 per cent, to CHF 899 million (Rs 7,100 crore) — in 2019.

About:

- Even as some nations witnessed a jump in 2019, there has been an overall decline in money parked by residents across countries in Swiss banks since the year of the global financial crisis.
- While overall foreign deposits have fallen 41 per cent since 2007, that for India has declined by 79 per cent since 2007. For India, the total liabilities of Swiss banks stood highest in 2006 at CHF 6.46 billion.
- It has come down in line with the Centre’s steps over the last few years to curb black money in the economy and following the setting up of new framework in 2016 that allowed exchange of information between Switzerland and India to help check the black money menace.
- The SNB data comes after the first set of details of bank accounts held by Indian nationals were shared under the new framework for Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) between Switzerland and India to help check the black money menace last September.

Preferential Allotment Pricing Norms

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has relaxed the preferential allotment pricing norms for companies while tightening the insider trading regulations as part of its attempts to minimise instances of unpublished, price-sensitive information getting leaked.

Preferential Allotment Pricing Norms

- It also amended the settlement proceeding norms to enable a faster disposal of cases while tweaking the Takeover Regulations as well.
- Companies with frequently traded shares can take into account the average of the weekly high and low over the past 12 weeks or two weeks, whichever is higher, and price the preferential allotment above that mark.
- While the existing pricing mechanism will continue, the relaxed pricing option will be available for all preferential allotments made between July 1 and December 31, 2020.

Insider trading

- SEBI also amended the SEBI (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations making it mandatory for companies to maintain a structured, digital database containing the nature of unpublished price-sensitive information (UPSI) and the names of persons who have shared the information.
- This assumes significance as the SEBI has been probing various matters wherein UPSI was shared by company officials with outsiders through applications like WhatsApp.

RBI Will Supervise Cooperative Banks

To protect depositors, the Centre has decided to bring all urban and multi-State cooperative banks under the supervision of the RBI. The Union Cabinet approved an ordinance to this effect.

About:

- RBI's powers on scheduled banks would be hence applicable on cooperative banks as well.
- The urban cooperatives and multi-State cooperative banks are 1,540 in number and have a depositor base of 8.6 crore who have saved ₹4.84 lakh crore
- Currently, these banks come under dual regulation of the RBI and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.
- The move to bring these urban and multi-State coop. banks under the supervision of the RBI comes after several instances of fraud and serious financial irregularities, including the major scam at the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank last year. In September, the RBI was forced to supersede the PMC Bank's board and impose strict restrictions.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Sankalp Parva

On the call of Prime Minister, Union Culture Ministry will celebrate "Sankalp Parva" to plant trees from 28th June to 12 July 2020.

About:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for planting at least five trees either in Office campus or wherever it is possible, to ensure clean and healthy environment of the country.
- In this background, Union Ministry of Culture has decided to celebrate Sankalp Parva from 28th June to 12 July 2020, wherein Ministry expects all its Subordinate Offices, Academies, Attached Institutions, Affiliated Institutions to plant trees in its campus or at the surroundings wherever it is possible.
- Ministry of Culture recommends to plants following five trees which represent the herbal heritage of our country: (i) "Bargad" (ii) "Awla" (iii) "Pepal" (iv) "Ashok" (v) "Bel".

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

Maareech

The Indian Navy said on Friday it has inducted an advanced anti-torpedo decoy system called 'Maareech' that is capable of being fired from all frontline ships.

About:

- 'Maareech' has been designed and developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and it is capable of detecting, locating and neutralizing incoming torpedo.
- Bharat Electronics Limited, a defence PSU, would undertake the production of this decoy system.
- The prototype of this system installed onboard a nominated naval platform had successfully completed all user evaluation trials.
- Anti-Submarine Warfare capability of the Indian Navy received a major boost with its induction.

Nanozymes

A research team at the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru has developed nanozymes that destroy the cell membrane of bacteria by directly targeting its phospholipids.

About:

- Nanozymes are nanomaterials that can disintegrate the cell membranes of a range of diseases causing bacteria.
- The nanomaterial developed in IISc is tested on several potentially pathogenic bacteria causing typhoid, gastroenteritis, dysentery, cholera and pneumonia. It was found that the nanozyme stopped growth and killed the microbes.
- Nanozymes developed by them can replace the antibiotics that have become ineffective as several bacteria have developed resistance to them by producing their own enzymes.

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

Khumukcham Sanjita Chanu

Two-time Commonwealth Games gold-winning weightlifter K. Sanjita Chanu, who was recently exonerated of doping charges, will receive the Arjuna Award for 2018.

About:

- Khumukcham Sanjita Chanu (born 1994) is an Indian weightlifter from Manipur.
- She is a two time Commonwealth Games Champion. Chanu won the gold medals at the 2014 Glasgow and the 2018 Gold Coast events in the women's 48 kg and 53 kg weight category respectively.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT

Product Application And Development Centre (PADC), Paradip

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas inaugurated a Product Application & Development Centre (PADC) setup by Indian Oil at Paradip.

About:

- PADC has been setup by Indian Oil at Paradip, adjacent to its Refinery and Petrochemicals complex.
- There are 4 laboratories in PADC namely Polymer Processing Lab, Analytical Testing Lab, Chemical Analysis Lab and Characterisation Lab.
- PADC, Paradip is recognized as a research centre by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt of India.
- The centre will render assistance to customers and investors in product and application development for polymer finished products such as molded furniture, houseware, wovensacks for packaging cement, fertiliser, healthcare applications like baby diaper, personal protective suit, mask etc.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q. "Efficient utilisation of public funds is fundamental to a sustainable society." Examine the reasons for the lack of efficient utilisation of public funds.

Efficient utilisation of public funds is necessary for judicious use of financial resources to satisfy the needs of the present society in such a way that it doesn't compromise the capability of societies of future generations to meet their own needs.

A number of sociopolitical and administrative factors are responsible for inefficiency in utilisation of public funds.

Political reasons

- Political rivalry: Sometimes political class indulges in acts of vendetta which erodes the cooperation and collective efforts required for development.
 - For example delay in allocation of developmental funds to opposition MLAs/MPs by Government in power.
- Irrational freebies distribution: Irrational distribution of freebies and signing off loans for electoral popularity puts pressure on budgetary balance.
- Politicised protests: Frequent ill intended protests and bandhs by any political faction increase the incurred costs due to delay in the public works undertaken.

Administrative reasons

- Policy paralysis: Delays, inaction and inability to take policy decisions by the government or its various departments and agencies is one the main causes of inefficiency in public fund utilisation.
- Bureaucratic attitude: Sometimes despotic attitude and obstructionist attitude of officials especially in higher echelons of bureaucracy acts as hindrance in carrying out developmental activities.
- Inadequate political will: Like recently due to inefficiency and underutilisation of funds, the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) has been suspended for two financial years.
- Red tapism: Due to over regulation and practice of requiring excessive paperwork and tedious procedures before official action hinders implementation of schemes and projects, thereby it affects process of effective public fund utilisation
- Lack of public participation: With a high level of illiteracy and ignorance about government policies and schemes, many citizens (especially poor) could not demand their rightful financial liabilities from the Government.
- Lack of autonomy of public watchdogs: Like the Central Vigilance Commission lack powers to take decisions itself as it is treated as an advisory body only it has no power to register criminal cases against government officials.
 - Similarly limited jurisdiction of CAG and lack of autonomy of CIC further weakens the capability to whistleblow and check accountability for irregularities in public finance.
- Non Implementation of citizen charter: Many public institutions have still not adopted a citizen charter, a tool of good governance to deliver public services to citizens as rights in a time bound manner.
 - Non adoption of citizen charter is an impediment to efficient public fund utilisation.

Social Reasons

- Social apathy towards corruption: In India many people accept corruption as a norm due to which even the people with ill-gotten money enjoy the same status as the honest rich.
 - This is unlike some societies like that of Japan where instances of social boycott of the corrupted people have been observed.
- Inefficient education system: Failure of the education system to inculcate the moral values of honesty and integrity firmly in its people.
- Inequality: Social and economical equality in Indian society foment greed among people to amass as much resources as possible when they get an opportunity.
 - These cases of corruption are seen even in utilisation of public money at community level such as in Panchayats.
- Lack of Institutional social accounting: The process of communicating the social and environmental effects of actions and inactions of public authorities to particular interest groups within society like in the MNREGA scheme is not institutionalised.

Conclusion

- Efficient utilisation of public funds requires a number of reforms for good governance such as decentralisation of power, plugging legislative loopholes, strengthening the public Institutions like CVC and RTI, enhancing administrative accountability and making society more democratic. These reforms could make society more sustainable in the long run.