

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION,  
EMPOWERMENT ETC****Amendment to the Trade Unions Act, 1926**

The Union Cabinet has approved Amendment to the Trade Unions Act, 1926 to make provisions regarding Recognition of Trade Unions.

**Proposed Amendments :**

- The proposed Bill will ensure that the nomination of workers' representatives in tripartite bodies by the government will become more transparent.
- Trade Unions so recognized would be accountable in maintaining industrial harmony.
- Recognition of Trade Unions at Central/State level would reduce duplicacy of such exercise by different departments. Recognized Trade Unions may be assigned specific roles at Central or State level.

The approval will facilitate the Recognition of Trade Unions at Central and State level; Ensure true representation of workers in the tripartite bodies; Check on the arbitrary nomination of workers' representatives by the Government Reduce litigations and industrial unrest.

**Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926**

- The legislation regulating the trade unions is the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926.
- The Act deals with the registration of trade unions, their rights, their liabilities and responsibilities as well as ensures that their funds are utilized properly.
- It gives legal and corporate status to the registered trade unions.
- It also seeks to protect them from civil or criminal prosecution so that they could carry on their legitimate activities for the benefit of the working class.
- The Act is applicable not only to the union of workers but also to the association of employers and extends to whole of India.
- Also, certain Acts, namely, the Societies Registration Act, 1860; the Co-operative Societies Act, 1912; and the Companies Act, 1956 shall not apply to any registered trade union, and that the registration of any such trade union under any such Act shall be void.

**Trade Unions in India**

The credit for the first association of Indian workers is generally given to the Bombay Mill-Hands Association founded by N.M. Lokhande in 1890. This was in the period just after the passing of the 'First' Factories Act in 1881 by the British Government of the time. The following years saw the formation of several labour associations and unions. The first clearly registered trade-union is considered to be the Madras Labour Union founded by B.P. Wadia in 1918.

**Indian Science Congress 2019 in Punjab**

106th 'Indian Science Congress (ISC)' session is being held at Jalandhar, Punjab. Indian Science Congress is organised by the Indian Science Congress Association every year in the first week of January.

Theme – Future India: Science and Technology.

**Indian Science Congress Association:**

The Indian Science Congress Association was started in the year 1914 in Kolkata and has a membership of more than 30,000 scientists. It owes its origin to the foresight and initiative of two British chemists, namely, Professor J. L. Simonsen and Professor P. S. MacMahon. It occurred to them that scientific research in India might be stimulated if an annual meeting of research workers somewhat on the lines of the British Association for the Advancement of Science could be arranged.

**Objectives:**

- To advance and promote the cause of science in India.
- To hold an annual congress at a suitable place in India.
- To publish such proceedings, journals, transactions and other publications as may be considered desirable.
- To secure and manage funds and endowments for the promotion of Science including the rights of disposing of or selling all or any portion of the properties of the Association.
- To do and perform any or all other acts, matters and things as are conducive to, or incidental to, or necessary for, the above objects.

**GEOGRAPHY****Ultima Thule: Farthest object ever visited**

Recently NASA's New Horizons spacecraft carried out a historic flyby of a distant object called Ultima Thule followed by beaming back of the first images. It is the most distant object ever visited, which is one of the reasons that make the mission special.

**Ultima Thule**

Officially named as 2014 MU69, it earned the nickname Ultima Thule following a public contest in 2018. It is located in the Kuiper Belt, a disc in the outer Solar System (beyond Neptune) that consists of small bodies including Pluto. 2014 MU69 was discovered in June 2014 by astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope but is so distant that many of its characteristics remain to be understood.

Located about 6.5 billion kilometres from Earth, 2014 MU69 is believed to be a peanut-shaped space rock about 32 km long and 16 km wide. Its shape has given rise to the theory that it might actually be two rocks moving in tandem. It orbits the Sun once every 298 years. In March 2018, NASA invited suggestions for a nickname for 2014 MU69. Out of 34,000 submissions, NASA chose Ultima Thule, which means "beyond the borders of the known world". In July 2018, scientists calculated that they would be able to see the object's shadow from the southern tip of Argentina.

**The mission**

- New Horizons, a space probe that was launched in 2006, became the first mission to visit Pluto in 2015.
- Travelling farther into the Kuiper Belt, the nuclear-powered space probe has come within 3,500 km of Ultima Thule.
- Images taken revealed that the object may have a shape similar to a bowling pin, or a "snowman", or a peanut spinning end over end, or could be two objects orbiting each other.
- Flyby data showed that Ultima Thule is spinning like a propeller with the axis pointing approximately toward New Horizons.
- NASA released a composite of two images taken by New Horizons' high-resolution Long-Range Reconnaissance Imager.

**Importance of the Probe**

- The mission will look for more exact details of the object's size, shape, orbit and environment.
- The probe is important because it holds remnants from the birth of the Solar System.
- Many Kuiper Belt objects have remained unchanged for billions of years, and could provide clues to the history of the Solar System, and possibly the conditions that led to the evolution of a habitable world like Earth.

**Kuiper Belt**

Kuiper belt is a region of the solar system beyond the planets, extending from the orbit of Neptune. It consist mainly small bodies or remnants from the solar system's formation. It is similar to the asteroid belt, although it is far larger 20 times as wide and 200 times as massive. The Kuiper belt objects (KBO) are composed largely of frozen volatiles (termed 'ices'), such as methane, ammonia and water. Kuiper belt is home to at least three dwarf planets Pluto, Haumea and Makemake. Pluto, discovered in 1930, is considered its largest member.

**Yellow alert sounded for Cyclone Pabuk**

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has stated that cyclone Pabuk will move northwestwards and cross the Andaman Islands late on 6<sup>th</sup> Jan as a cyclonic storm with wind speed up to 90 kmph. IMD has sounded a yellow alert for the cyclone Pabuk. The Pabuk cyclone would cause heavy rain over the Andaman Islands.

**Cyclone Pabuk**

Cyclone Pabuk originated over the Gulf of Thailand and neighbourhood. The IMD predicts that Pabuk would move northwestwards and emerge into the Andaman Sea. Then it would move northwestwards and cross the Andaman Islands. Then recurve northeastwards towards Myanmar coast and weaken gradually.

**Cyclone warnings**

The four stages of cyclone warnings in India are:

- The First Stagewarning Pre Cyclone Watch, issued 72 hours in advance. It contains an early warning about the development of a cyclonic disturbance in the north Indian Ocean, its likely intensification into a tropical cyclone and the coastal belt likely to experience adverse weather.
- The second stage warning is Cyclone Alert, is issued at least 48 hrs in advance of the expected commencement of adverse weather over the coastal areas. It contains information about the location and intensity of the storm likely direction of its movement, intensification, coastal districts likely to experience adverse weather and advice to fishermen, the general public, media and disaster managers. Stage of warning Colour code
  - Cyclone Alert -Yellow.
  - Cyclone Warning- Orange.
  - Post-landfall outlook -Red.
- The Third Stage warning is Cyclone Warning, issued at least 24 hours in advance of the expected commencement of adverse weather over the coastal areas and the landfall point is forecasted at this stage.
- The Fourth Stage of warning is Post Landfall Outlook and it gives likely direction of movement of the cyclone after its landfall and adverse weather likely to be experienced in the interior areas.

Even though there is no cyclonic situation for Odisha, Seven districts of Odisha have been put on alert and the weather in Odisha would be cloudy and dry

### **CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**

#### **Appointment of Lokpal**

The government recently informed the Supreme Court that a eight-member search committee has been constituted in September 2018 for zeroing in on eligible candidates for Lokpal and the anti-corruption authority will frame its own rules of functioning. The panel is led by former Supreme Court judge, Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai.

**Background:** A contempt petition has been filed in the court against the government for not appointing Lokpal despite an April 2017 judgment by the Supreme Court. The court has for the past several months been constantly urging the government to complete the Lokpal appointment.

#### **Highlights of the Lokpal Act of 2013:**

- The Act allows setting up of anti-corruption ombudsman called Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayukta at the State-level.
- The Lokpal will consist of a chairperson and a maximum of eight members.
- The Lokpal will cover all categories of public servants, including the Prime Minister. But the armed forces do not come under the ambit of Lokpal.
- The Act also incorporates provisions for attachment and confiscation of property acquired by corrupt means, even while the prosecution is pending.
- The States will have to institute Lokayukta within one year of the commencement of the Act.
- The Act also ensures that public servants who act as whistleblowers are protected.

### **GOVERNANCE- SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC**

#### **Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana in Maharashtra**

To reduce losses due to non-payment of electricity bills and also promote solar energy, Maharashtra state government has launched Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana.

#### **Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana:**

- Under the scheme, the government of Maharashtra has decided to give two LED bulbs, a DC fan and a mobile charging socket as freebies to farmers.
- The scheme provides a subsidy of up to 95% on solar pumpsets. The State plans to install one lakh solar pumps.
- Eligibility: Under the Scheme, farmers with less than five acres will have to pay 5% of the cost of a 3 HP solar pump while farmers with more than five acres will get a 5 HP solar pump for Rs 30000.
- The Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co Ltd (Msedcl) is the implementing agency.

- The scheme would be beneficial to farmers who reside in remote areas where the agricultural feeder is not possible.

### **Accdolades for Mission Indradhanush**

‘Mission Indradhanush’ has been selected as one of the 12 best practices globally and has been featured in a special issue of the British Medical Journal titled ‘Improving vaccination coverage in India: lessons from Intensified Mission Indradhanush, a cross-sectoral systems strengthening strategy’.

Mission Indradhanush was showcased during the ‘Partner’s Forum’ held at New Delhi on 12th-13th December 2018 which was attended by around 1200 international and national delegates working on Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health.

**Mission Indradhanush** : To strengthen and re-energize the programme and achieve full immunization coverage for all children and pregnant women at a rapid pace, the Government of India launched “Mission indradhanush” in December 2014. The ultimate goal is to ensure full immunization with all available vaccines for children up to two years of age and pregnant women. The Government has identified 201 high focus districts across 28 states that have the highest number of partially immunized and unimmunized children.

**Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI)** : To further intensify the immunization programme, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Intensified Mission (IMI) in 2017. Government of India aims to reach each and every child up to two years of age and all those pregnant women who have been left uncovered under the routine immunization programme/UIP.

### **Drugs (Prices Control) Amendment Order, 2019**

The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has recently released the Drugs (Prices Control) Amendment Order, 2019. Drug price control is all about striking the right balance between consumer and producer interests. The DPCO (Drugs Prices Control Order) fixes the prices of scheduled drug formulations. It also monitors maximum retail prices of all drugs, including the non-scheduled formulations.

Key provisions:

- A drugmaker who has brought in an innovative patented drug will be exempt from the price control regulations for 5 years from the date of marketing.
- The Drug Price Control Order (DPCO), 2013, has been amended to this effect.
- The amendments were made on the basis of the NITI Aayog’s recommendations to the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP).
- Drugs for treating rare or “orphan” diseases too will be exempt from price control, with a view to encouraging their production.
- Under the amended DPCO, the Centre will continue fixing prices in line with market-based data available on drugs.
- The source of market-based data shall be the data available with the pharmaceutical market data specialising company as decided by the government.
- If the government deems it necessary, it may validate such data by appropriate survey or evaluation.

### **Swachh Survekshan Survey launched in New Delhi**

The fourth edition of the Swachh Survekshan Survey has been launched in New Delhi. The Swachh Survekshan 2019 will be conducted by an independent third party across 4,237 towns and cities between January 4 and 28.

#### **Objectives of the Swachh Survekshan Survey**

- To encourage large-scale participation of citizens.
- To ensure the sustainability of the initiatives taken towards garbage-free and open defecation-free cities.
- To foster a spirit of healthy competition among towns and cities to improve their service delivery to citizens and towards creating cleaner cities.
- The Swachh Survekshan Survey 2019 will be a completely digital and paperless survey and would be completed in a record time of 24 days.