

**GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.****My Life My Yoga**

Prime Minister of India announced the “My Life – My Yoga”(also called “Jeevan Yoga”) Video Blogging Contest.

**About:**

- The contest is a joint effort by the Ministry of AYUSH and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) to inspire people to become active participants in the observation of the sixth International Day of Yoga (IDY) coming up on 21st June 2020.
- This contest is open to all participants across the world. The contest has gone live on the social media handles of the Ministry of AYUSH today, 31 May 2020.
- To enter into the contest the participants are required to upload a 3 minutes duration video of 3 Yogic practices (kriya, asana, pranayama, bandha or mudra), including a description on how the said Yogic practices influenced their life.
- For the India contestants, prizes worth Rs. 1 lakh, 50K and 25K for 1st, 2nd and 3rd ranking within 6 categories have been announced. Details of the global prizes will be announced shortly on the Yoga Portal of Ministry of AYUSH.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS****Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)**

China has been objecting to the presence of the US THAAD missile defence system in South Korea.

**About:**

- THAAD is an acronym for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, a transportable, ground-based missile defense system.
- THAAD is coupled with space-based and ground-based surveillance stations, which transfer data about the incoming missile and informs the THAAD interceptor missile of the threat type classification. THAAD is alarmed about incoming missiles by space-based satellites with infrared sensors.
- This anti-ballistic missile defense system has been designed and manufactured by the US company Lockheed Martin.
- It has been deployed in the South Korea, UAE, Guam, Israel and Romania. In South Korea, the THAAD missile defense system is operated by the US army stationed in its army base in Osan, South Korea.

**Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement**

George Floyd's death has sparked violent protests in the US bringing focus on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

**About:**

- George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man, died in Minneapolis recently while he was being restrained by the police.
- Video footage of the incident showed an officer kneeling on Floyd's neck as he gasped for breath. Floyd's repeated cry for help, “I can't breathe”, has now become a rallying cry among protesters.
- The death has triggered violent unrest in Minneapolis and other parts of the US. The incident once again brought to the fore concerns over the law enforcement's bias against the African American minority.

**Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement**

- Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an international activist movement, originating in the African-American community, that campaigns against violence and systemic racism towards black people.
- It campaigns against police killings of black people, and broader issues such as racial profiling, police brutality, and racial inequality in the United States criminal justice system.
- In 2013, the movement began with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media.
- BLM is largely decentralised and does not have a formal hierarchy.

**Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act Of 2020**

The U.S. House of Representatives approved a legislation calling for sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for oppression of Uyghur Muslims, sending the Bill to the White House for President Donald Trump to veto or sign into law.

**About:**

- The Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 is a bill in the United States Congress that would require various United States government bodies to report on the treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China, including internment in the Xinjiang re-education camps.
- It calls for sanctions against those responsible for repression of Uyghurs and other Muslim groups in China's Xinjiang province, where the United Nations estimates that more than a million Muslims have been detained in camps.
- It singles out the region's Communist Party secretary, Chen Quanguo, as responsible for "gross human rights violations" against them.
- The Bill also calls on U.S. firms operating in Xinjiang region to ensure their products do not include parts using forced labour.
- Uighur: Until recently its population was mostly Uighur. Most Uighurs are Muslim and Islam is an important part of their life and identity.

#### Related Info :

- The Uyghurs are a Turkic ethnic group who live in East and Central Asia. Uyghurs primarily practice Islam. Their language is related to Turkish, and they regard themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.
- They live primarily in the Xinjiang, officially the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR), is a provincial-level autonomous region of China in the northwest of the country. It is the largest of China's administrative regions.

#### **Hong Kong**

China's Parliament passed a new legislation for Hong Kong called the "NPC Decision on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to Safeguard National Security".

#### About:

- The law will for the first time empower China to draft national security laws for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The scope of the laws could cover any activity that "seriously endangers national security".
- It also enables organs of the central government "for the protection of national security" to set up "institutions in the HKSAR", a provision that has been a particular source of concern.
- The law could also block foreign judges from sitting on national security cases. Hong Kong's court of final appeal has 15 foreign judges, under a system aimed to ensure judicial independence for a global financial centre.
- Criticism: The NPC decision has been criticised by pro-democracy parties and some in the legal community in Hong Kong as undermining the "one country, two systems" model. Since it returned to Chinese rule in 1997, Hong Kong has been governed by the Basic Law, which gives the SAR "executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication". Only matters of defence and foreign affairs are handled by the central government.
- USA Reaction: USA President Donald Trump announced that Hong Kong could no longer enjoy the special economic privileges it had received from the U.S. because of the erosion of its autonomy, a move that could hurt the SAR's economy.

#### **G7 Artificial Intelligence Group**

The US has joined G7 artificial intelligence group, an international panel for setting ethical guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence. The Trump administration had earlier dismissed the idea.

#### About:

- This Global Partnership on AI setup by the Group of Seven will guide the responsible adoption of AI based on shared principles of "human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation and economic growth.
- According to the US, it is important to establish shared democratic principles as a counter to China's record of "twisting technology" in ways that threaten civil liberties. US involvement is important because of the large role that American tech firms play globally.

#### Related Info :

- The Group of Seven (G7) is an international intergovernmental economic organization consisting of the seven large IMF- advanced economies in the world: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

#### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

United States President Donald Trump has announced that America is terminating its relationship with World Health Organization (WHO) over its handling of the Corona virus.

About:

- He blamed WHO and China for the deaths and destruction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe.
- The US President said, because they have failed to make the requested and greatly needed reforms, the United States will be terminating its relationship with WHO forthwith and redirecting those funds to other worldwide and deserving, urgent global public health needs.
- Trump initially suspended funding to the WHO last month. Now, he made that decision permanent in a major blow for the agency's finances, as the U.S. is by far its biggest contributor, pumping in \$400 million last year.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that the Government of India has discontinued 7.75% savings (taxable) bonds, 2018 for subscription.

About:

- The 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018, also known as RBI bonds or government bonds, were issued with effect from January 10, 2018 and were available for subscription to resident citizens/HUF to invest in a taxable bond.
- While one bond was of Rs 1,000 each, the bonds had no maximum limit for investment.
- The bonds had a 7-year lock-in period from the date of issue, but, it permitted premature encasement to individuals who were 60 years and above.
- Interest on these bonds will be taxable under the Income-tax Act, 1961.

Recent Decision:

- The government has withdrawn these bonds with effect from 28th of May, 2020 and therefore it will not be available for investors to invest. This means it is only ceasing fresh issuance and not redeeming those already invested.
- Comment: While the move comes in line with the cut in repo rate by the RBI and subsequent cut in deposit rates by banks and small savings rate by the government, the move will deprive investors of another saving instrument that yielded relatively higher post tax returns for investors.

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

#### **Scorpaenospsis Neglecta**

Researchers at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have found a rare fish from Sethukarai coast in the Gulf of Mannar. The specimen has been deposited in the National Marine Biodiversity Museum of the CMFRI.

About:

- The band-tail scorpionfish (*Scorpaenospsis neglecta*) is called 'scorpionfish' because its spines contain neurotoxic venom. When the spines pierce an individual, the venom gets injected immediately and it can be extremely painful. Eating the fish would lead to death.
- The fish is well-known for its ability to change colour and blend with its surrounding environment to escape from predators and while preying.
- This was the first time that the particular species was found alive in Indian waters.

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

#### **World Milk Day**

World Milk Day 2020 was celebrated on June 1, celebrating the 20th anniversary of World Milk Day.

About:

- World Milk Day is a day established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations to recognize the importance of milk as a global food.
- It has been observed on June 1 each year since 2001.

### **DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Q. "The needs of migrants should be addressed through a concerted national policy." In the light of the statement critically examine the utility of One Nation One Ration Card scheme.**

**Answer**

Indian states are unable to provide basic necessities like food, housing, health, sanitation, education, transport and skilling to migrant workers who play an important part in the urban economies.

- This highlights the pressing need for a concerted policy to secure and protect rights of all migrant workers.
- In this context, the 'One Nation One Ration Card' (ONORC) scheme has been devised to provide portability of food security benefits all across the nation.
- The ONORC scheme is all about inter-state portability of ration cards. It enables the beneficiaries who are taking food grains under the Public Distribution System (PDS) to access the same benefits if they happen to migrate from one part of the country to the other, in a seamless manner.

#### Benefits Emanating From ONORC scheme

- **Interoperability of Ration Card:** The scheme will allow any PDS recipient to use their ration cards at any PDS shop across the country.
  - The poor migrant workers will be able to buy subsidised rice and wheat from any ration shop in the country but for that their ration cards must be linked to Aadhaar.
- **Empowering Consumers:** The scheme will give the beneficiaries the opportunity to opt for the dealer of their choice. If any dealer misbehaves or misallocates, the beneficiary can switch to another Fair Price Shop (FPS) instantly.
- **Right to Food:** The enactment of the National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013 marks a paradigm shift in the approach to food security from welfare to the rights-based approach.
  - The ONORC scheme will ensure that the right to food (a legal entitlement) is secured to all the people including migrants and no poor person is deprived of subsidised grains.
- **Integrating the Country:** The ONORC scheme will add to the integration of the country as wherever a person goes, he will be able to get food grains at that place. This scheme will further help in adding to the nutritional values of the poor consumers.

#### Challenges Associated with the Scheme

- **Domicile-Based Social Sector Schemes:** PDS is a domicile-based scheme and thus it restricts people to access government social security, welfare and food entitlements at their place of origin. It needs serious rethinking before making 'ONOR Card' portable.  
**Logistical Issues:** An FPS receives the monthly quota of products strictly in accordance with the number of people assigned to it.
  - The ONORC, when fully operational, would disrupt this practice, as some FPSs may have to cater to more numbers of cards even as others cater to less, owing to migration of people.
- **Cost of Additional Food Grain:** One of the apprehensions mentioned by few states is the cost of additional food grain to be supplied to the migrant workers.
- **Logistical Issues:** An FPS receives the monthly quota of products strictly in accordance with the number of people assigned to it.
  - The ONORC, when fully operational, can disrupt this practice, as some FPSs may have to cater to more numbers of ration cards and some to less, owing to migration of people.
- **Technological Challenges:** Since the scheme is based on technology, the government may face some technical challenges in the functioning of the scheme.
  - Like the fears of exclusion are applied for migrant workers, as the fingerprints of people engaged in construction labour and domestic work may change or fade and may not match with the ones entered in Aadhaar.

#### Way Forward

- The One Nation One Ration Card scheme should also include access to health and other welfare schemes.
- A dedicated e-commerce platform ONORC may resolve the challenge of logistical issues.
- Social auditing must be made mandatory to measure the performance of ONORC.
- The Unorganised Sector Social Security Act, 2008, had drawn up a system of documenting informal sector workers through a system of welfare boards. In order to get credible data regarding the migrant workers, this must be implemented in letter and spirit.

Thus, a concerted national policy such as ONOR Card scheme, a national migration policy, is the need of the hour which will ensure a unified service delivery system based on technology and identity.