

teGOVERNANCE**Partners in Population and Development Initiative**

Recently, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare has digitally addressed the Inter-Ministerial Conference by Partners in Population and Development (PPD).

Key Points**Partners in Population and Development:**

Aim: It is an intergovernmental initiative created specifically for the purpose of expanding and improving South-South Cooperation in the fields of reproductive health, population, and development.

Launch: PPD was launched at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), when ten developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America formed an intergovernmental alliance to help implement the Cairo Program of Action (POA).

The POA, endorsed by 179 nations, stresses the need to establish mechanisms to promote development through the sharing of experiences in reproductive health (RH) and family planning (FP) within and among countries.

Members: An alliance of 27 developing countries. India is a member country.

Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Inter-Ministerial Conference by PPD:

It was jointly organised by PPD, National Health Commission of China (NHC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Objective:

- Advocate and ensure political support and investment to address the effects of Covid-19 pandemic in the achievement of the Three Zeros by 2030, finalised under the Nairobi Summit 2019.
- India appreciated the efforts of PPD in promoting cooperation in key areas of reproductive health, population and development.

Nairobi Summit

- In November 2019, the Nairobi Summit, also known as ICPD+25, was held in Nairobi, Kenya, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ICPD (held in Cairo in 1994).
- The UNFPA and the Government of Kenya hosted the Nairobi Summit, which brought together governments, UN agencies, private sector organizations, women's groups and youth networks to discuss and agree on initiatives to further advance the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.
- Three Zeros by 2030: Pledges were announced to achieve zero preventable maternal deaths, zero unmet need for family planning, and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices by 2030.

Steps Taken by India:

- Steadfast in its reaffirmation of the commitments made at the Nairobi Summit.
- Committed to ensuring universal health coverage through its flagship programme Ayushman Bharat.
- The Government has pledged USD 3 billion by 2020 for improving reproductive health services.
- With aspirations of achieving universal health care, India's National Health Policy 2017 aims at raising public health expenditure to 2.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- Continuous efforts to substantially reduce the unmet need for contraception by increasing the range of contraceptives and improving accessibility and quality of family planning services.
- Implementation of Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) initiative for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target for reducing Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) to less than 70 by 2030.
- It is enacting stringent legislation to address gender-based violence and eliminate all forms of atrocities against women and girls.
- Dedicated to providing quality, timely and disaggregated data, investing in digital health innovations, and improvement of data systems by 2030 to achieve sustainable development.
- The National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) aims to develop the backbone necessary to support the integrated digital health infrastructure of the country.
- India's Covid-19 response started even before it was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- Community-based interventions including family planning are also a part of various services provided.

- Promotion of alternate service delivery mechanisms along with telemedicine services, digital platforms for training, improving finances and streamlining supply chain systems.

Way Forward

Current times require integrated and coordinated efforts from all health institutions, academia and other partners directly or indirectly associated with the health care services to make these services accessible, affordable and acceptable to all. PPD plays an important role in fostering such dialogue at the highest levels to take forward the common agenda of 'Health for All'.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Rise in AI Adoption in India Amidst Pandemic**

As per a report by PwC (a global network of firms), India reported a 45% increase in the use of Artificial Intelligence, the highest among all countries, following the outbreak of the virus.

Key Points**Findings:**

- The rise of AI adoption (45%) recorded in the country is the highest, when compared to major economies like the USA, Japan and the UK.
- The USA recorded a 35% rise, the UK 23% and Japan 28% following the outbreak of the virus.
- The report attributes the growing AI adoption to the shift in buying behaviour and new business challenges (owing to Covid-19 pandemic).
- For instance, AI-enabled use cases like contactless sales and delivery have gained traction. AI solutions are also being used to make the workplace safer and enforce best practices.
- The sectors with highest Covid-19 led disruption adopted AI solutions in a more definitive manner. In the travel and hospitality sector, 89% firms have implemented AI in some form.

Artificial Intelligence:

- It describes the action of machines accomplishing tasks that have historically required human intelligence.
- It includes technologies like machine learning, pattern recognition, big data, neural networks, self algorithms etc.
- AI involves complex things such as feeding a particular data into the machine and making it react as per the different situations. It is basically about creating self-learning patterns where the machine can give answers to the never answered questions like a human would ever do.
- AI technology helps in analyzing data and thus can improve the efficiency of the systems like power management in cars, mobile devices, weather predictions, video and image analysis.
- Example (Use): Self driving cars.

Recent Government Initiatives:

- India has launched National AI Strategy and National AI Portal and has also started leveraging AI across various sectors such as education, agriculture, healthcare, e-commerce, finance, telecommunications, etc.
- Recently, India joined the 'Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)' as a founding member to support the responsible and human-centric development and use of AI.

Use of AI in India**To Tackle the Pandemic:****At the National Level:**

- For the Covid-19 response, an AI-enabled Chatbot was used by MyGov for ensuring communications.
- Similarly, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) deployed the Watson Assistant on its portal to respond to specific queries of frontline staff and data entry operators from various testing and diagnostic facilities across the country on Covid-19.
- In Kerala: Use of Srishti Robotics' 'Nightingale-19 Robot' is a good example.
- It delivers food and medicines in bulk and also allows doctors and other healthcare practitioners to use video interactive technologies to interact with patients.
- In Maharashtra: FebriEye is an AI based thermal screening system for real-time and automated, non-intrusive monitoring to ensure that a person entering does not have a high fever.
- It has been installed in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus and Lokmanya Tilak Terminus in Mumbai.

In Other Sectors:

- AI-based solutions on water management, crop insurance and pest control are also being developed.

- ICRISAT has developed an AI-power sowing app, which utilises weather models and data on local crop yield and rainfall to more accurately predict and advise local farmers on when they should plant their seeds.
- An AI-based flood forecasting model that has been implemented in Bihar is now being expanded to cover the whole of India to ensure that around 200 million people get alerts and warnings 48 hours earlier about impending floods.
- The Central Board of Secondary Education has integrated AI in the school curriculum to ensure that students passing out have the basic knowledge and skills of data science, machine learning and artificial intelligence.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) had launched a “Responsible AI for Youth” programme this year in April, wherein more than 11,000 students from government schools completed the basic course in AI.

Way Forward

- As AI works for digital inclusion in India, it will have a ripple effect on economic growth and prosperity. The opportunity for AI in India is colossal, as is the scope for its implementation. By 2025, data and AI can add over USD 500 billion and almost 20 million jobs to the Indian economy.
- India wants to build a data-rich and a data-driven society as data, through AI, which offers limitless opportunities to improve society, empower individuals and increase the ease of doing business. India can leverage AI for inclusive development, representing the country's 'AI for All' strategy.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Demand for Interest Waiver

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has heard a batch of petitions seeking interest waiver during the loan moratorium period.

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted a six-month loan moratorium earlier this year, letting borrowers defer payments on loans and EMIs. The move was intended to provide borrowers relief during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key Points

Central Government's Stand:

Huge Cost: It revealed that a blanket waiver of interests on debts incurred by all borrowers for the moratorium period will mean forgoing an estimated over Rs. 6 lakh crore.

Possible Impact on Banks: If the banks were to bear this burden, then it would necessarily wipe out a substantial and a major part of their net worth, rendering most of the lenders unviable and raising a very serious question mark over their very survival.

Deposits vs. Loans: Continued payment of interest to depositors is not only one of the most essential banking activities but is a huge responsibility that can never be compromised as most of the depositors are bound to be small depositors, pensioners etc. surviving on the interest from their deposits.

In the Indian banking system, for every loan account, there are about 8.5 deposit accounts.

Use of Financial Resources: There is a need to conserve and rationally use financial resources to deal with the economic effects of pandemic over an uncertain and indeterminate time frame.

It also pointed out the sector-specific relief measures taken by the Centre for the small and mid-sized business/MSMEs including from sectors such as restaurants and hotels.

Relief Measures Taken by the Centre:

For Power Sector:

The government had sanctioned over Rs. 90,800 crore liquidity injection for the power distribution companies. This would enable them to pay their outstanding dues to power producers and transmission companies.

For Real Estate Sector:

- An advisory was issued allowing the extension of registration and completion dates of projects under Real Estate Regulatory Authorities by treating Covid-19 as an event of force-majeure.
- From a contractual perspective, a force majeure clause provides temporary reprieve to a party from performing its obligations under a contract upon occurrence of a force majeure event.

For Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Sector:

An emergency credit line (ECLGS) of up to Rs. 3 lakh crore, backed by 100% government guarantee to enable the MSMEs to get back to regular operations.

For Small Borrowers:

- The Centre has decided that the relief on waiver of compound interest during the six-month moratorium period shall be limited to the most vulnerable category of borrowers who availed loan up to Rs. 2 crore.
- The RBI has classified “big borrowers” having the loan account of Rs. 1500 crores and above and rest as “not big borrowers”.

For Big Borrowers:

The Kamath Committee set up by the RBI has recommended financial parameters for debt restructuring of 26 sectors affected by Covid-19.

Other Measures:

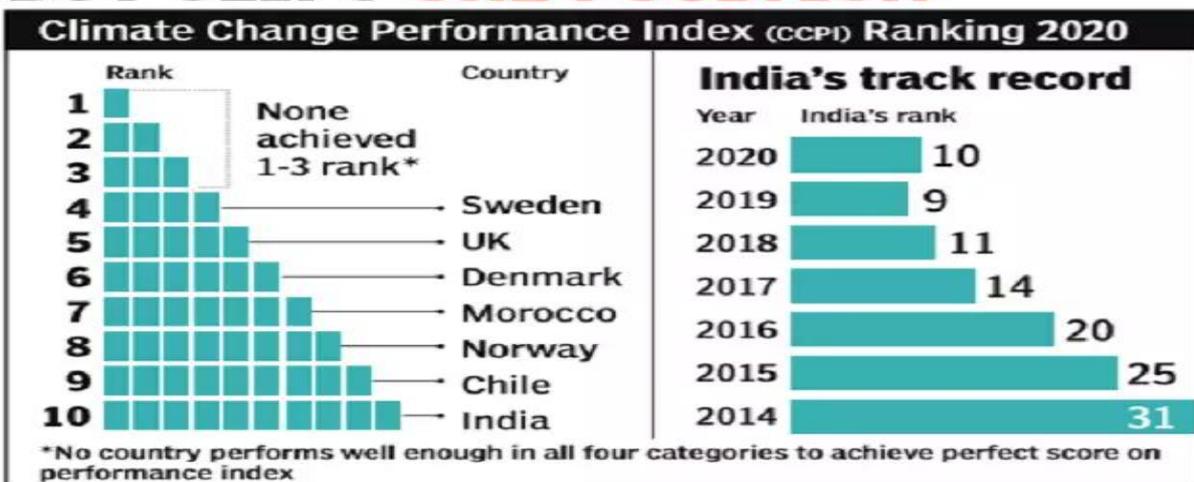
- The Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC) was suspended for a period of six months in order to protect companies in distress due to the pandemic being dragged into bankruptcy tribunals.
- The Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued circulars to relax the “recognition” of defaults committed during moratorium.

BIODIVERSITY & ENVIRONMENT

Climate Change Performance Index

India ranked 10th in Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2021.

BUT SLIPS ONE POSITION



India, for the second time in a row, continued to remain in the top 10.

Last year, India had been ranked at the ninth position.

Key Points

About Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI):

Published by: Germanwatch, the New Climate Institute and the Climate Action Network annually since 2005.

Scope: It is an independent monitoring tool for tracking the climate protection performance of 57 countries and the European Union.

These countries together generate 90%+ of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Aim: It aims to enhance transparency in international climate politics and enables comparison of climate protection efforts and progress made by individual countries.

Criteria: The CCPI looks at four categories, with 14 indicators: Greenhouse Gas Emissions (40% of the overall score), Renewable Energy (20%), Energy Use (20%), and Climate Policy (20%).

CCPI 2021:

- Top three ranks were empty as no country had met the criteria to get placed high enough on the index.
- Only two G20 nations, the United Kingdom and India are among the high rankers in CCPI 2021, which covers the year 2020.
- Six other G20 nations including the USA, Canada, South Korea, Russia, Australia and Saudi Arabia are ranked at the bottom of the index.
- This is the second time in a row that the USA (ranked last), which is the largest historical polluter, is ranked at the bottom.

- China, which is the biggest current emitter of greenhouse gases, is ranked at the 33rd position on the CCPI 2021 report.

India's Performance:

Overall Performance: India ranked 10th and scored 63.98 points out of 100.

Renewable Energy: India has been ranked at 27th out of 57 countries under the category this time. Last year, the country was ranked at 26th.

- In September 2019, at the United Nations Climate Action Summit, India announced increasing the renewable energy target to 450 GW by 2030 from 175 GW by 2022.
- In its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), India has pledged to increase the share of non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40% by 2030.

Emissions: Per capita emissions stayed at a comparatively low level. India was ranked 12th.

BS-VI Emission Norms: India moved to BS-VI Emission Norms to control the emissions from the automobiles.

Climate Policy: India's performance was rated as medium (13th).

The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) was launched in 2008 which aims at creating awareness among the representatives of the public, different agencies of the government, scientists, and the industry on the threat posed by climate change and the steps to counter it.

Energy Use: India was ranked High (10th) under this category.

- The country has not only established a comprehensive policy for energy efficiency – National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE), but has also executed successful demand side management programmes for consumers and municipal corporations to achieve overall energy savings while gradually mitigating the impact of climate change.
- NMEEE is a part of NAPCC.

Suggestion for India:

India's climate change mitigation strategy should include post-Covid-19 recovery plans, according to the report. These include reducing fossil fuel subsidies, phasing out coal, better coordination between the central and state governments and raising self-sufficiency by domestic manufacturing in the renewable sector.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Beresheet 2: Israel**

Recently, Israel launched the Beresheet 2 project aimed at landing an unmanned craft on the moon in 2024.

Earlier, Israel's Beresheet probe crash landed on the Moon.

Key Points**Background:**

- The Beresheet probe was a private mission to the Moon by Israeli non-profit SpaceIL organisation.
- Beresheet in hebrew (spoken in Israel) means Genesis.
- It was successfully launched in February 2019, on board a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral (USA) and arrived in lunar orbit in April 2019.
- It suffered an engine failure as it prepared to land and crashed abruptly on the surface of the moon.

Beresheet 2:

Objective: Conducting experiments and collecting data on behalf of school students.

Structure: It will involve launching two landing craft and an orbiter that would circle the moon for years.

Cost: It will cost around 100 million dollars raised from international partnerships and donors.

Significance: Israel could become the fourth nation to land a spacecraft on the moon after the USA, the former Soviet Union and China.

Other Missions to Moon:

- India has planned a new moon mission named Chandrayaan-3. It is likely to be launched in early 2021.
- It will be a mission repeat of Chandrayaan-2 and will include a Lander and Rover similar to that of Chandrayaan-2, but will not have an orbiter.
- Chandrayaan-2 failed which crushed India's dream to become the first nation to successfully touch down on the lunar surface in its maiden attempt.

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has decided to send an unmanned spacecraft to the moon in 2024.
- Artemis is a crewed spaceflight program of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) that has the goal of landing "the first woman and the next man" on the Moon, specifically at the lunar south pole region by 2024.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns Discuss the role that rural centric policies can play in reaping India's demographic dividend. (150 words)

Ans:

Demographic Dividend is a stage in demographic transition of a country where the working age population is more than the dependency ratio. India's average age at 28 years and such a demographic dividend is expected to last for nearly 35 years. Approximately two-third of India's population resides in rural areas. In this context, it becomes important to focus on rural areas for reaping such dividends.

Better health status leads to increased productivity of labour leading to an efficient economy.

- Rural India faces challenges of malnutrition, skewed female health indicators like maternal mortality, anemia etc. This lowers labour's productivity.
- Programmes like Ayushman Bharat, Poshan Abhiyan, focus on female health will increase their productivity and labour force participation ratio.

Better education and skills leads to ability to find work in the market.

- Rural India has skewed schooling outcomes highlighted in the ASER report.
- The skills needed to work in the secondary and tertiary sector are also lacking leading to over dependence on the primary sector.
- Programmes like Skill India, reforms in schooling system as highlighted by Kasturirangan Committee would lead to labour moving out of agriculture and development of the manufacturing and service sector.

Good infrastructure leads to better ability to utilise resources and transmission of information.

- Rural India shows contrast in terms of development as compared to urban areas as a result labour have limited mobility, opportunity and know-how of newer economic opportunities.
- Programmes like PM-Gram Sadak Yojana, PURA, Bharatnet etc. can overcome these challenges and increased opportunity for labour.

Investment in Agriculture leads to generation of growth poles and increase of quality opportunities in rural areas.

- Although agriculture is not seen as a remunerative occupation, through advances in innovation, capacity-building, partnership and participatory approaches, better market linkages and, most importantly, by developing a synergy with other sectors of the economy, many employment and entrepreneurial opportunities can be created.

In order to develop rural areas, there is a need for a convergent approach. For example:

- Strengthening local governance and decentralised decision making by way of more powers and funds to Panchayats. Special grant can be given to areas covered under PESA and scheduled areas.
- Sensitizing the governance process at central and state level by incorporating rural specific ramifications in every decision making like that of Gender Budgeting.
- Bringing an urban ecosystem and experience like the culture of startups to rural areas.

Conclusion

- India's demographic dividend cannot work without including its working population in remunerative activities. This would need actions based on the pull factor as discussed above to help labour move towards newer opportunities along with push factors that lowers dependency of agriculture like mechanisation, land pooling policy etc.

DAILY QUIZ

1. Which of the following statements are correct with reference to Lunar missions?

1. Beresheet 2 project of Israel is aimed at landing a manned craft on the moon in 2024.
2. The Artemis program of NASA aims to send the first woman and the next man to the moon by 2024.
3. Chandrayaan-3 will be launched by ISRO in 2021.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 3 only

- b) **2 and 3 only**
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

2. With reference to the Partners in Population and Development (PPD), consider the following statements:

1. The initiative aims for expanding and improving South-South Cooperation in the fields of reproductive health, population, and development.
2. PPD was launched at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994.
3. The secretariat of PPD is located in New Delhi.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) **1 and 2 only**
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

3. Consider the following statements:

1. SAMADHAN doctrine was announced to contain the problem of Left Wing Extremism in India.
2. The doctrine encompasses the long-term strategy of central government formulated with top down approach.

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 application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in India, consider the following statements:

1. Nightingale-19 Robot in Kerala uses AI to predict cyclones.
2. FebriEye screening system uses AI to monitor high fever in Maharashtra.

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. Which among the following organisations publishes 'The Climate Change Performance Index'?

- a) **German watch**
- b) United Nations Environment Program
- c) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- d) The World Wide Fund for Nature