

GOVERNANCE

EatSmart Cities Challenge and Transport 4 All Challenge

Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the **EatSmart Cities Challenge** and **Transport 4 All Challenge**. The challenges aim at creating an **environment of right food practices and habits** and to make **public transport safe, affordable, comfortable, and reliable**.

Key Points

- **EatSmart Cities Challenge** :The EatSmart Cities Challenge is envisioned as a competition among cities to recognize their efforts in adopting and scaling up various initiatives under **Eat Right India**. The challenge is open to all **Smart Cities**, capital cities of States /UTs, and cities with a population of more than 5 lakh.
- **Objective**:It aims to motivate Smart Cities to develop a plan that supports a healthy, safe and sustainable food environment supported by institutional, physical, social, and economic infrastructure along with the application of ‘smart’ solutions to combat food related issues.
- **Significance**:The challenge has a potential to create social and behavioural change towards food safety, hygiene and nutrition.

Initiatives:

- **Limit TFA**:Recently, the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has capped the amount of trans fatty acids (TFA) in oils and fats to 3% for 2021 and 2% by 2022 from the current permissible limit of 5% through an amendment to the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations 2011.
- **‘Raman 1.0’**: A new-age, hand-held battery operated device to perform rapid detection (in less than 1 minute) of economically driven adulteration in edible oils, fats and ghee.
- **Food Safety Magic Box**: This do-it-yourself food testing kit comprises a manual and equipment to check for food adulterants, which school children can use in their classroom laboratories.
- **Food Safety Mitra scheme**: It aims to support **small and medium-scale food businesses** so as to comply with the **food safety laws** and will facilitate them with the licensing and registration process, hygiene ratings and training programme.
- **Eat Right Mela**: It is an outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right. It is organised to make citizens aware of the health and nutrition benefits of different types of food.

Transport 4 All Challenge:The Transport 4 All Digital Innovation Challenge Aims to develop digital solutions that will make public transport safe, affordable, comfortable, and reliable for all.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

2021 :World Population Report

Recently, the **United Nations Population Fund’s (UNFPA)** flagship **State of World Population Report 2021** titled ‘**My Body is My Own**’ was launched.

Key Points

- **Violation of Bodily Autonomy**:The principle of bodily integrity sums up the **right of each human being, including children, to autonomy and self-determination over their own body**. It considers an unconsented physical intrusion as a **human rights violation**.

Some Examples:

- **Child marriage**.
- Female genital mutilation.
- Lack of contraceptive choices leading to unplanned pregnancy.
- Unwanted **sex exchanged for a home and food**.
- When **people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities cannot** walk down a street without fearing assault or humiliation.
- **Global Scenario**: Nearly **half the women from 57 developing countries** do not have the right to make decisions regarding their bodies, including using contraception, seeking healthcare or even on their sexuality. Only **75% of countries legally ensure full and equal access to contraception**.
- **Effect of Covid**:Women around the world are denied the fundamental right of bodily autonomy with the **Covid-19 pandemic** further exacerbating this situation.
- **Indian Scenario**:
 - **12%** of currently **married women** (15-49 years of age) **independently make decisions** about their own healthcare.
 - **63%** decide in **consultation with their spouse**.

- For **23%** it is the **spouse that mainly takes decisions** about healthcare.
- **8%** of currently married women (15-49 years) **take decisions on the use of contraception independently.**
- **83% decide jointly with their spouse.** Information provided to women about use of contraception is also limited.
- **47% of women** using a contraceptive **were informed about the side effects of the method.**
- **54%** women **were provided information** about other contraceptives.

Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has **increased substantially** in most States/UTs and it is the highest in HP and WB (74%).

NATIONAL ISSUE

To think about Regional Trading Agreements for India

Recently, Singapore's Foreign Minister while addressing the 6th edition of the Raisina Dialogue suggested **India to reassess its stand on Regional Trading Agreements (RTA) such as Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).**

Key Points

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership:

- **About: RCEP** is the world's largest **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** and was signed by all 10 **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** is a regional organization (ASEAN) members and key partners including China, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand at the 4th **RCEP leaders' summit in November 2020.**

Significance:

- **Eliminate Tariffs:** It is expected to **eliminate a range of tariffs** on imports within 20 years and also includes provisions on intellectual property, telecommunications, financial services, e-commerce and professional services.
- **Equality:** Under RCEP, parts from any **member nation would be treated equally**, which might give companies in RCEP countries an **incentive to look within the trade region for suppliers.** Businesses with global supply chains might face tariffs even within an FTA because their products contain components that are made elsewhere.
- **Increased Global Income:** The deal could **increase global national income by USD 186 billion annually by 2030** and add 0.2% to the economy of its member states. However, some analysts think the deal is likely to benefit China, Japan and South Korea more than other member states.

India's Stand: India **withdrew** from the RCEP largely because of **concerns it would open it up to Chinese goods amid an already wide trade imbalance with China**, and the failure of the agreement to adequately open up to services.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership:

About:

The **CPTPP** is a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** between **11 countries** around the **Pacific Rim** which are :

Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan.

Significance:

- **Removes Tariffs:** The CPTPP removes 99% of tariffs on goods and services, just like the original TPP did.
- **Broad Coverage:** The CPTPP covers a broad range of goods and services. These include financial services, telecommunications, and food safety standards.
- **Reduces Environmental Abuses:**
All countries **agreed to cut down on wildlife trafficking.** That helps elephants, rhinoceroses, and marine species the most. It **prevents environmental abuses**, such as unsustainable logging and fishing. Countries that don't comply will face trade penalties.

India's Stand: India did not join CPTPP as it **seeks to place greater labor and environmental standards** on its other partners and **CPTPP draft includes narrowly detailed qualifications on standards for investment protection, provisions to protect the host state's right to regulate**, and the imposition of detailed transparency requirements.

Need for India to Reassess RCEP & CPTPP:

- **To Boost its Manufacturing Sector**

- To Strengthen Individual Relations
- To be a Major Player in Regional Development
- To Provide Indian Companies Better Platforms

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Three New Services of National Internet Exchange of India

Recently, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has inaugurated **three new initiatives/services** of National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI). **IP Guru, NIXI Academy, NIXI-IP-INDEX** have been launched to facilitate adoption of IPv6 and create an environment to ensure smooth transition from IPv4 to IPv6.

Key Points

- **About (NIXI):**
NIXI is a **not-for-profit organization** (section 8 of the Companies Act 2013) working **since 2003** for **spreading the internet infrastructure** to the citizens of India through the following activities:
Internet Exchanges through which the internet data is exchanged amongst Internet Service Providers (ISP's), Data Centers and Content Delivery Network (CDNs).IN Registry, **managing and operation of .IN country code domain** and .BHARAT IDN (Internationalized Domain Name) domain for India.Indian Registry for Internet Names and Numbers (IRINN), managing and operating **Internet Protocol (IPv4/IPv6)**.

About the Three New Initiatives:

IPv6 Expert Panel (IP Guru):

- It is a **group to extend support to all the Indian entities** who are finding it technically challenging to **migrate and adopt IPv6**. It will be **offering its services free of cost**.
- It's a joint effort of the Department of Telecom (DOT), MeitY and industry.

NIXI Academy:

- NIXI Academy is created to **educate technical/non-technical people** in India to learn and relearn technologies like IPv6 which are normally not taught in Educational Institutes.
- Successful candidates (after passing examination) **can take a certificate from NIXI**, which will be useful to find/upgrade jobs in the Industry.

NIXI-IP-INDEX:

- NIXI has developed an **IPv6 index portal** for the Internet community.
- NIXI-IP-INDEX portal will **showcase the IPv6 adoption rate in India and across the world**. It can be used to compare IPv6 Indian adoption rate with other economies in the world.
- It will also include **details about web adoption in IPv6, IPv6 traffic etc**.

Importance for India:

- The sustainable development and evolution of internet infrastructure is **essential to the global cyberspace and digital economy**, and IPv6 root server, which controls and manages the internet, can serve as a great tool.
- Creating such critical infrastructure at the national level is important. As a critical internet resource, the IPv6 root server system is **pivotal to manage the security and stability of the internet**.
- It will **contribute to in-country expertise building on critical information infrastructure** as well as promoting 'a major technological knowledge base within the country', and having a root server within the country would facilitate surveillance by Indian legal authorities.

ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

Dolphine Census in Odisha

Recently, Odisha has released the final data on the dolphin census, indicating a spectacular growth in numbers.

Key Points

- **Census Data:**
 - The **population of dolphins in Chilika**, India's largest brackish water lake, and along the Odisha coast has **doubled this year (2021)** compared with last year.
 - **Three species were recorded** during the census, with 544 **Irrawaddy, bottle-nose and humpback dolphins** sighted this year, compared with 233 last year.
 - The **rise in the Irrawaddy dolphin population in Chilika** can be attributed to the **eviction of illegal fish enclosures**.

- **About Irrawaddy Dolphins:**
 - **Habitat:** Irrawaddy dolphins are **found in coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia**, and in **three rivers:** the Ayeyarwady (Myanmar), the Mahakam (Indonesian Borneo) and the Mekong.
The Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphins inhabit a 118-mile stretch of the river between Cambodia and Lao PDR.
 - **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- **About Indo- Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins:**
 - **Habitat:** Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins generally occur in shallow coastal waters of the **Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and Australia.**
 - **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Near Threatened
- **About Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphins:**
 - **Habitat:** The Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin occurs within the Indian Ocean from South Africa to India.
 - **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Endangered

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

India Restore E-Visa

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has restored **electronic visa (e-visa)** facility for **foreigners from 156 countries**, who intend to visit India for the purposes of **business, conferences, and for medical reasons**, including in the case of medical attendants.

Key Points

- **E-Visa:**

Launch: The e-visa system is an **innovation introduced by the government in 2014**. The facility was expanded in 2017-2018.
The process has its **roots in the 2010 Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVOA) scheme** for Japan, Singapore, Finland, Luxembourg and New Zealand.
The government **merged the TVOA with Electronic Travel Authorisation**, thereby creating the e-visa.

Five Categories: An e-visa also called **Electronic Visa** is provided in five categories—**tourist, business, conference, medical, and medical attendant.**
- **Current Status:** Though the **facility is available to 171 countries**, after restrictions were announced in 2020, it has been **restored only for 156 countries**. China, the UK, Canada, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia are **excluded** from the current restoration.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns Explain the term welfare state? Discuss to what extent Indian fulfills the criteria of being a welfare state? (250 words)

Ans:

The welfare state is a way of governing in which the state or an established group of social institutions provides basic economic security for its citizens.

A welfare state is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions of a good life.

Features of Welfare State in India

- **Striving to achieve social goals:** Through Directive Principles, the State strives to achieve various common social goals like conservation of the environment, gender equality, representation to depressed communities etc.
- **Ensuring Food Security:** India has achieved food security for its citizens by the Green Revolution, White Revolution and currently working on Nutritional Security by implementing the National Nutrition Mission.
- **Redistribution of wealth:** So as to reduce inequalities have been affected in the form of Land Reforms, Progressive Taxation Policy, Subsidies etc.
- **Legal Provisions:** Cronyism, Profiteering is made subservient to common good by strict laws like Companies Act, Prevention of Corruption Act etc.

Challenges to Indian Welfare State:

- Income inequality in India has been rising especially after LPG reforms, as per Oxfam report.
- Failure of policy implementation like the Land Ceiling Act.
- Prevalence of discrimination – gender (Nirbhaya Case), caste (Dalit atrocities), minorities (communal violence) etc.
- Unemployment levels have steadily risen in the last five years.

Conclusion

Thus, India faces many challenges in becoming a Welfare State model in true sense. However, it continually strives to move in that direction in future too, evident in programmes like Ayushman Bharat, Bharatmala and Sagarmala project, strengthening of armed forces etc.

DAILY QUIZ

1 Which of the following bodies is the designated authority to examine and act upon purported malpractices in local body elections?

- a) The Election Commission of India (ECI)
- b) **State Election Commission**
- c) Zila Parisad
- d) District Planning Committee

2. Consider the following statements.

1. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 was enacted pursuant to Article 15 of the Constitution.
 2. According to the POCSO Act, 2012, it is the legal duty upon a person who has knowledge that a child has been sexually abused to report the offence.
 3. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child protects children from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and pornography.
- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) **1,2,3**
 - d) None of the Above

3. Consider the following statements regarding National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).

1. National Commission for Backward Classes is a non-constitutional body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
2. The commission was the outcome of Indra Sawhney & Ors. Vs. Union of India.
3. The commission considers inclusions in and exclusions from the lists of communities notified as backward for the purpose of job reservations.
4. The commission have the same powers as a Civil Court.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1,2
- b) **2,3,4**
- c) 1,2,3
- d) None of the Above

4. Jaapi, Xorai and Gamosa are primarily associated with which state?

- a) **Assam**
- b) Odisha
- c) Mizoram
- d) Nagaland

5. Consider the following statements regarding Brucellosis.

1. Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that mainly infects cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs.
2. Humans get infected if they come in direct contact with infected animals and not by eating or drinking contaminated animal products.
3. Human to human transmission is very rare.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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