

ECONOMY**G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting**

Recently, the Union Minister for Labour and Employment has said that India is making collective efforts to reduce gender gaps in labour force participation. He was delivering the Ministerial Address on Declaration and Employment Working Group Priorities at G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting.

About - G20

- It is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- The G20 membership comprises a mix of the world's largest advanced and emerging economies, representing about two-thirds of the world's population, 85% of global gross domestic product, 80% of global investment and over 75% of global trade.
- Members: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, and the European Union.

Key Points**Issues Discussed:**

- The Employment Working Group deliberated upon key issues, including women employment, social security and remote working. In 2014, G20 Leaders pledged in Brisbane to reduce the gap in labour force participation rates between men and women by 25% by 2025, with the aim of bringing 100 million women into the labour market, increasing global and inclusive growth, and reducing poverty and inequality.

Initiatives Highlighted by India:

- **Educational and Skilling Efforts:**
 1. **New National Education Policy, 2020:** It aims for reforms in school and higher education systems. India is strengthening its educational and skilling efforts to ensure quality education from preschool to senior secondary stage.
 2. **National Skill Development Mission :** It aims to create convergence across sectors and States in terms of skill training activities.
 3. **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana :** It enables the youth to take up industry related skill training to assist them in securing better opportunities.
 4. **Digital educational content** has been made available on various e-learning platforms like DIKSHA, SWAYAM.
- **For Employment Generation:**
 1. **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana :** The government is paying up to 24% of wages towards EPF contributions for new employees as well as those who lost their jobs in the pandemic and are being re-employed.
 2. **To Ensure Women Participation:**
 3. **New Code on Wages, 2019:** It will reduce gender-based discrimination in wages, recruitment and conditions of employment.
 4. **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana :** It provides financial support to women entrepreneurs to start small enterprises. Collateral free loans worth Rs 9 lakh crore have been disbursed under this scheme. There are around 70% of women in this scheme.
 5. **New Code on Social Security :** It may now include even self-employed and all other classes of workforce into the folds of social security coverage.
- **Others :** Women can now work even during night hours and the duration of paid maternity leave has been increased from 12 weeks to 26 weeks.

G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target:

- This has been developed for achieving equal opportunities and outcomes for women and men in the labour markets as well as societies in general.
- The G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target has been set as:
 1. Increasing the quantity and quality of women's employment.
 2. Ensuring equal opportunities and achieving better outcomes in the labour market.
 3. Promoting a more even distribution of women and men across sectors and occupations.
 4. Tackling the gender pay gap.
 5. Promoting a more balanced distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men.

6. Addressing discrimination and gender stereotypes in the labour market.

Labour Force Participation

- The labor force participation rate indicates the percentage of all people of working age who are employed or are actively seeking work.
- India continues to struggle to provide its women with equal opportunity.
- In 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, female labor force participation in India was 23.5%, according to ILO estimates.
- According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2018-19, the female labour force participation rates (LFPR) among women aged above 15 years are as low as 26.4% in rural areas and 20.4% in urban areas in India.

Constraints in Female Labor Force Participation

- Stereotyping in Society:** India's societal norms are such that women are expected to take the responsibility of family care and childcare. This stereotype is a critical barrier to women's labor force participation. Due to this, women are in constant conflict over-allotment of time for work and life is a war of attrition for them.
- Digital Divide:** In India in 2019, internet users were 67% male and 33% female, and this gap is even bigger in rural areas. This divide can become a barrier for women to access critical education, health, and financial services, or to achieve success in activities or sectors that are becoming more digitized.
- Technological Disruption:** Women hold most of the administrative and data-processing roles that artificial intelligence and other technologies threaten to usurp. As routine jobs become automated, the pressure on women will intensify and they will experience higher unemployment rates.
- Lack of Gender-Related Data:** Globally, major gaps in gendered data and the lack of trend data make it hard to monitor progress. In India, too, significant gaps in data on the girl child prevent a systematic longitudinal assessment of the lives of girls.
- Impact of Covid-19:** Owing to Covid-19, global female employment is 19% more at risk than male employment (ILO estimates).

Way Forward

Work opportunities for women are restricted to a few sectors. Policies are needed to promote access to employment across the spectrum of sectors and occupations, investments in diversified sectors and upgrade to high-end activities, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas along with infrastructural support like transport, housing, sanitation facilities, lights and so on. Encouraging female entrepreneurship can promote a broader dynamic economy, elevate the economic role of women, and therefore distribute the benefits of growth more equitably.

SOCIAL ISSUE

Ebola Virus

Recently, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared that the Ebola outbreak, that started in February 2021 in Guinea, is over now. In its first deadly wave in 2013-2016, the Ebola outbreak killed 11,300 people, mostly in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The WHO in its list of "Ten threats to global health in 2019" also included Ebola.

Key Points

About Ebola Virus Disease (EVD):

- EVD, formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human to human transmission.
- Ebola virus was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Transmission:

Fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family are natural Ebola virus hosts.

- Animal to Human Transmission:** Ebola is introduced into the human population through close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals such as fruit bats, chimpanzees, gorillas, monkeys, forest antelope or porcupines found ill or dead or in the rainforest.
- Human-to-Human Transmission:** Ebola spreads via direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with:
 - Blood or body fluids of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola.

2. Objects that have been contaminated with such body fluids (like blood, feces, vomit).

Symptoms : These can be sudden and include: Fever, Fatigue, Muscle pain, Headache, Sore throat, Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function, in some cases, both internal and external bleeding.

Diagnosis : It can be difficult to clinically distinguish Ebola from other infectious diseases such as malaria, typhoid fever, and meningitis but confirmation that symptoms are caused by Ebola virus infection are made using the following diagnostic methods:

1. ELISA (antibody-capture enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay)
2. Reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) assay, etc.

Vaccines:

1. The Ervebo vaccine has been shown to be effective in protecting people from the species Zaire ebolavirus.
2. In May 2020, the European Medicines Agency recommended granting marketing authorization for a 2-component vaccine called Zabdeno-and-Mvabea for individuals 1 year and older.

Treatment : Two monoclonal antibodies (Inmazeb and Ebanga) have been approved for the treatment of Zaire ebolavirus infection in adults and children by the US.

GOVERNANCE

Reform Linked Borrowing

Indian states were able to borrow an extra Rs. 1.06 lakh crore in 2020-21 (FY21) due to the Reform Linked Borrowing window. This was announced to provide an additional leeway to states in order to cope with the adverse effects of Covid-19 pandemic on the economy.

Key Points

About:

- This was a nudge, incentivising the States to adopt progressive policies to avail additional funds.
- In October 2020, the Central government had linked permission for additional borrowing of 1% of their GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) to implementation of four critical reforms, which are:
 1. Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System,
 2. Ease of doing business reform,
 3. Urban Local body/ utility reforms and
 4. Power Sector reforms.
- Under this reforms-linked borrowing window, states were to get access to funds of up to Rs 2.14 lakh crore on completion of all the four reforms.
- For states completing three of the four reforms, the Centre would provide additional funds assistance of Rs. 2,000 crore for capital expenditure.
- For FY 2021-22, the net borrowing ceiling for states has been fixed at 4% of the projected GSDP (about Rs 8.46 lakh crore), based on recommendations of the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

One Nation One Ration Card System (ONORC) Reforms:

- This was aimed to ensure that the beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFS) and other welfare schemes, especially the migrant workers and their families, get ration from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) across the country.
- Other aims of the intended reform were to better target beneficiaries, elimination of bogus/ duplicate/ ineligible ration cards and thus enhance welfare and reduce leakage.
- For this, the reform conditions stipulated Aadhar Seeding of all Ration Cards, biometric authentication of beneficiaries and automation of all the FPS in the State.

'Ease of Doing Business' Reforms:

- It is to facilitate a better environment and seamless process for entrepreneurs and companies to operate.
- The reforms stipulated in this category are:
 1. Completion of first assessment of 'District Level Business Reform Action Plan'.
 2. Elimination of the requirements of renewal of Registration certificates/approvals/licences obtained by businesses under various Acts.
 3. Implementation of a computerized central random inspection system under the Acts.

Urban Local Body/ Utility Reforms:

- These reforms are aimed at financial strengthening of ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) in the States and to enable them to provide better public health and sanitation services to citizens.
- It required states to notify floor rates of property tax and of water and sewerage charges. This was in consonance with stamp duty guideline values for property transactions and current costs in urban areas.

Power Sector Reforms:

- There are three parameters a state must meet under the power sector reforms - reduction in Aggregate Technical & Commercial (AT&C) losses, targeted reduction in Average Cost of Supply and Average Revenue Realisation (ACS-ARR) gap, and direct benefit transfer (DBT) of electricity subsidy to farmers.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**Antarctic Treaty**

Recently, the 60th anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty was celebrated. The Antarctic treaty remains the only example of a single treaty that governs a whole continent. It is also the foundation of a rules-based international order for a continent without a permanent population.

Key Points**About:**

- The Antarctic Treaty was signed between 12 countries in Washington on 1st December 1959 for making the Antarctic Continent a demilitarized zone to be preserved for scientific research only. The twelve original signatories are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the UK and the US.
- It entered into force in 1961 and has since been acceded by many other nations.
- Antarctica is defined as all of the land and ice shelves south of 60°S latitude. Recently, an enormous iceberg 'A-76' has calved from the western side of the Ronne Ice Shelf, lying in the Weddell Sea, in Antarctica.

Members : Currently it has 54 parties. India became a member of this treaty in 1983.

Headquarters : Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Major Provisions:

- Promoting the freedom of scientific research.
- Countries can use the continent only for peaceful purposes.
- Prohibition of military activities, nuclear tests and the disposal of radioactive waste.
- Neutralising territorial sovereignty, this means a limit was placed on making any new claim or enlargement of an existing claim.
- It put a freeze on any disputes between claimants over their territories on the continent.

Dispute & Resolution:

- There have been tensions from time to time. Argentina and the UK, for instance, have overlapping claims to territory on the continent.
- However, a key reason why the treaty has been able to survive has been its ability to evolve through a number of additional conventions and other legal protocols. These have dealt with the conservation of marine living resources, prohibitions on mining, and the adoption of comprehensive environmental protection mechanisms.
- As disputes have arisen over the years, many have been addressed through the expansion of the treaty framework with these agreements. This framework is now referred to as the Antarctic Treaty System.

Antarctic Treaty System:**About:**

1. It is the whole complex of arrangements made for the purpose of regulating relations among states in the Antarctic.
2. Its purpose is to ensure in the interests of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord. It is a global achievement and has been a hallmark of international cooperation for more than 50 years.
3. These agreements are legally binding and purpose-built for the unique geographical, environmental and political characteristics of the Antarctic and form a robust international governance framework for the region.

- **Major International Agreements of the Treaty System:**

1. The 1959 Antarctic Treaty.
2. The 1972 Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals.
3. The 1980 Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.
4. The 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

Indian Antarctic Programme**About:**

- It is a scientific research and exploration program under the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCPOR). It started in 1981 when the first Indian expedition to Antarctica was made.
- NCPOR is the nodal agency for planning, promotion, coordination and execution of the entire gamut of polar and southern ocean scientific research in the country as well as for the associated logistics activities. It was established in 1998.
- ❖ **Dakshin Gangotri :** Dakshin Gangotri was the first Indian scientific research base station established in Antarctica, as a part of the Indian Antarctic Program. It has weakened and become just a supply base.
- ❖ **Maitri :** Maitri is India's second permanent research station in Antarctica. It was built and finished in 1989. Maitri is situated on the rocky mountainous region called Schirmacher Oasis. India also built a freshwater lake around Maitri known as Lake Priyadarshini.
- ❖ **Bharti :** Bharti, India's latest research station operation since 2012. It has been constructed to help researchers work in safety despite the harsh weather. It is India's first committed research facility and is located about 3000 km east of Maitri.

Other Research Facilities:

- ❖ **Sagar Nidhi :** In 2008, India commissioned the Sagar Nidhi, for research. An ice-class vessel, it can cut through the thin ice of 40 cm depth and is the first Indian vessel to navigate Antarctic waters.

Way Forward

- While the Antarctic Treaty has been able to successfully respond to a range of challenges, circumstances are radically different in the 2020s compared to the 1950s. Antarctica is much more accessible, partly due to technology but also climate change. More countries now have substantive interests in the continent than the original 12. Some global resources are becoming scarce, especially oil.
- There is considerable speculation as to China's interests in Antarctic resources, especially fisheries and minerals, and whether China may seek to exploit weaknesses in the treaty system to secure access to those resources.
- Therefore, all of the treaty signatories, but especially those with significant stakes in the continent, need to give the future of the treaty more attention.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**4th Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan**

Recently, the Ramgarh Vishdhari wildlife sanctuary received a nod from the National Tiger Conservation Authority's (NTCA) technical committee to become the 4th Tiger reserve of Rajasthan. This will be the 52nd Tiger Reserve of India. The Global Tiger Day, celebrated on 29th July, is an annual event marked to raise awareness about tiger conservation.

Project Tiger

- It was launched in 1973 with 9 tiger reserves for conserving our national animal, the tiger.
- It is an ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- Currently, the Project Tiger coverage has increased to 51 Tiger reserves, spread out in 18 tiger range states which amounts to around 2.21% of the geographical area of our country.
- The tiger reserves are constituted on a core/buffer strategy. The core areas have the legal status of a national park or a sanctuary, whereas the buffer or peripheral areas are a mix of forest and non-forest land, managed as a multiple use area.
- The NTCA was launched in 2005, following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force. It is a statutory body of the Ministry, with an overarching supervisory/coordination role, performing functions as provided in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

- M-STRIPES (Monitoring System for Tigers - Intensive Protection and Ecological Status) is an app based monitoring system, launched across Indian tiger reserves by the NTCA in 2010.

Protection Status of Tiger

- Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List: Endangered.
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Appendix I.

Key Points

Ramgarh Vishdhari wildlife sanctuary:

- Location :** This Sanctuary is located at a distance of 45 Km from Bundi City on Bundi-Nainwa Road near Village Ramgarh, District Bundi, Rajasthan.
- Established :** It was notified in the Year 1982 and is spread over an area of 252.79 Sq. Km.
- Area of Tiger Reserve :** The total area of 1,017 sq. km has been identified as the reserve area comprising two forest blocks of Bhilwara, territorial forest block of Bundi and Indargarh, which falls under the buffer zone of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (RTR).
- Biodiversity :** Its flora consists of Dhok, Khair, Salar, Khirni trees with some Mango and Ber trees. The Fauna consists of birds and animals like Leopard, Sambhar, Wild boar, Chinkara, Sloth bear, Indian Wolf, Hyena, Jackal, Fox, deer and Crocodile.

Other Three Tiger Reserves:

- Rajasthan has three tiger reserves with over 90 big cats at Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (RTR) in Sawai Madhopur, Sariska Tiger Reserve (STR) in Alwar, and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve (MHTR) in Kota.



Other Protected Areas in Rajasthan:

- Desert National Park, Jaisalmer
- Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur
- Sajjangarh wildlife sanctuary, Udaipur
- National Chambal Sanctuary (on tri-junction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh).

2. Pygmy Hog

Recently, eight captive-bred pygmy hogs, the world's rarest and smallest wild pigs, were released in the Manas National Park of Assam. This is the second batch to have been reintroduced into the wild under the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP) in a year.

Key Points

Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP):

- The PHCP is a collaboration among Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust of UK, Assam Forest Department, Wild Pig Specialist Group of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- It is currently being implemented by NGOs - Aaranyak and EcoSystems India.
- Conservation of pygmy hog was initiated by noted naturalist Gerald Durrell and his trust in 1971. The pygmy hog was brought back from near-extinction by the partnership effort, and now moving towards the establishment of a population across the entire range.
- Six hogs were captured from the Bansbari range of the Manas National Park in 1996 for starting the breeding programme.
- The reintroduction programme began in 2008 with the Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, Orang National Park and Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary, all of them are in Assam.
- By 2025, the PHCP plans to release 60 pygmy hogs in Manas.

About Pygmy Hog:

- **Scientific Name:** Porcula Salvania
- **Features:**
 1. It is one of the very few mammals that build its own home, or nest, complete with a 'roof'.
 2. It is also an indicator species. Its presence reflects the health of its primary habitat, the tall, wet grasslands of the region.
- **Habitat:**
 1. It thrives in wet grassland.
 2. Once found along a narrow strip of tall and wet grassland plains on the Himalayan foothills – from Uttar Pradesh to Assam, through Nepal's terai areas and Bengal's duars. Today found mainly in a small population in Assam.
- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- **Threats:** Habitat (grassland) loss and degradation, and illegal hunting.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. 'Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries'. Comment with examples.

Ans:

Introduction

The Indian Diaspora has evolved over three phases in firstly Indian people were taken by colonial powers to work as plantation workers (like in Sri Lanka, Caribbean islands, Fiji, etc.), secondly, in search of better economic opportunities, many Indian went to countries like the US and many European countries and thirdly to gulf countries as skilled and semi-skilled laborers.

Today, the Indian diaspora is both agent and the instrument of India's soft power and in developed countries, it acts as an effective player in impacting the dynamics of these countries.

Body

- **Rich Minority Group:** Indian diaspora is one of the richest minorities in many developed countries, this helped them to lobby for favorable terms regarding India's interests. For example, at 2.8 million, Indians may number just 1% of the U.S. population, but they are the most educated and richest minority, according to a 2013 Pew survey.
- **Considerable Vote Bank:** Indian diaspora is not just a part of India's soft power, but a fully transferable political vote bank as well. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reception at Madison Square Garden is a way of thanking the Indian-American community members who played a big part in his electronic campaign and election funding.
- **Indian Diaspora in Political Position:** Many people of Indian origin hold top political positions in many countries, in the US itself they are now a significant part of Republicans and Democrats, as well as the government. Most recently, the newly elected Vice president of the US, Kamala Harris, is of Indian origin.
- **Influencing Foreign Policy Decision:** Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal is a case in point, as ethnic Indians in the United States successfully lobbied for clinching of the Nuclear-deal.
- **Indian Identity:** Within America and Europe, the Indian Diaspora is an effective public diplomacy tool and is acknowledged for its work ethos, discipline, non-interference, and peaceful

living with the locals. These values ultimately contribute to identity creation, image projection, and image cultivation of the Indians in the developed world.

- **New Wave of Indian Migration:** The Indian Diaspora has been channeled into U.S. and European countries mainly through student admission programs, beneficiaries of H-1B visa program, family-based preference, and temporary worker visa programs. Currently, a high percentage of Indian immigrants are young, highly educated, and well established in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) sectors.

Conclusion

Today, the Indian diaspora is more prosperous than before and its involvement in India's development is increasing. In this context, India should craft fully conduct diaspora diplomacy so as to turn diaspora potential into diaspora dividend.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Which of the following statements is true about the Model Tenancy Act (MTA) in India?

- The new Act seeks to cover urban and as well as rural areas.
- The new Act will not affect existing tenancies.
- After enforcement of this Act, no person can let or take on rent any premises except by an agreement in writing.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3**

Q2. Consider the following statements about Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):

- It is the only national body that frames standards in India.
- It works under the aegis of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1 only**
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. With reference to China's 'Artificial Sun' experiment, consider the following statements:

- The mission mimics the energy generation process of the sun.
- This project is part of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) facility.
- As of now, China is the only country that has achieved high plasma temperatures.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only**
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q4. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is headed by the:

- Prime Minister of India**
- President of India
- Home Minister of India
- Environment Minister of India

Q5. In which one of the following states is Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary located?

- Arunachal Pradesh
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- None of the above**