

GOVERNANCE**PRASHAD Projects**

Recently, the Ministry of Tourism inaugurated various components of the “Development of Govardhan, Mathura ” project under PRASHAD Scheme. The government also allocated funds under the Swadesh Darshan scheme for strengthening Tourism infrastructure within the state of Uttar Pradesh through various spiritual circuits such as the Ramayana and Buddha circuits.

Key Points**PRASHAD Scheme:**

- The ‘National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive’ (PRASAD) was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15 with the objective of holistic development of identified pilgrimage destinations.
- The name of the scheme was changed from PRASAD to “National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)” in October 2017. After the discontinuation of the HRIDAY scheme of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the development of Heritage destinations was included in the PRASAD Scheme, changing it to PRASHAD.
- Under the PRASHAD Scheme, several religious cities/sites in have been identified for development such as Amaravati and Srisailem (Andhra Pradesh), Kamakhya (Assam), Parasuram Kund (Lohit District, Arunachal Pradesh), Patna and Gaya (Bihar), etc.
- Implementation Agency: The projects identified under this scheme shall be implemented through the identified agencies by the respective State/ Union Territory Government.
- Funding Mechanism: The Central Government provides 100% funding for the project components undertaken for public funding. This scheme seeks to leverage the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for improved sustainability of the projects under this scheme.
- **The objectives of the PRASHAD scheme are as follows:**
 1. Harness pilgrimage tourism for its multiplier and direct effect on employment generation and economic development.
 2. Follow pro-poor tourism concept and community-based development in the development of the pilgrimage destinations.
 3. Leveraging public expertise and capital.
 4. Enhance tourist attractiveness sustainably by developing world-class infrastructure in religious destinations.
 5. Create awareness amongst the local communities about the importance of tourism for them in terms of improved living standards, increase in sources of income and overall development of the area.
 6. Promote local culture, arts, cuisine, handicrafts, etc., to generate livelihood in the identified places.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme:

- Swadesh Darshan, a Central Sector Scheme, was launched in 2014 -15 for the integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country. Under the scheme, fifteen thematic circuits have been identified- Buddhist Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Krishna Circuit, North East Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Wildlife Circuit.
- Under the scheme, the Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for infrastructure development of circuits.
- This scheme is envisioned to synergise with other schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India etc. with the idea of positioning the tourism sector as a major engine for job creation, driving force for economic growth, building synergy with various sectors to enable tourism to realise its potential.

Other Government Schemes Related to Tourism

1. Adopt A Heritage Project
2. Development of Iconic Tourist Sites
3. DekhoApnaDesh

ECONOMY**India to become Asia's 2nd Largest Economy by 2030**

According to the Information Handling Services (IHS) Markit report, India is likely to overtake Japan as Asia's second-largest economy by 2030. Currently, India is the sixth-largest economy, behind the U.S., China, Japan, Germany and the U.K.

- IHS Markit is a global leader in information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.
- Note: The size of a nation's overall economy is typically measured by its Gross Domestic Product, or GDP, which is the value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given year.

Key Points**GDP Projection:**

- In terms of value, the size of the Indian economy stood at USD 2.7 trillion in 2021, which is projected to grow to USD 8.4 trillion by 2030. This boom is enough to overtake Japan, making India the second largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region by 2030.
- India's growth rate is projected to be 8.2% in 2021-22, compared to a decline of 7.3% in the previous fiscal.
- However, the momentum of the current financial year (FY) will continue in 2022-23 as well and India will achieve 6.7% growth.

Role of Different Sectors:

- The manufacturing, infrastructure and services sector along with the e-commerce sector have a big role to play in boosting India's growth rate.
- Not only this, due to increasing digitization, the e-commerce market will become bigger in the coming times. According to a report, 1.1 billion Indians will have internet by 2030, in 2020 this number was 500 million.

Growth Rate:

- Overall the future of the Indian economy looks strong and stable, making it the fastest growing country in the country for the next decade.
- In the long term also, technological developments like infrastructure sector and startups will play a big role in sustaining India's rapid growth rate. Being one of the world's fastest-growing economies will make India one of the most important long-term growth markets for multinationals in a wide range of industries, including manufacturing industries such as autos, electronics and chemicals, and services industries such as banking, insurance, asset management, healthcare and information technology.

Middle Class Support:

- India gets the most help from its vast middle class, which is its main consumer force. Indian consumer spending will also double in the next decade. This could increase from USD 1.5 trillion in 2020 to USD 3 trillion in 2030.

FDI Inflows:

- The large increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows to India that has been evident over the past five years is also continuing with strong momentum in 2020 and 2021.
- It is being boosted by large inflows of investments from global technology Multinational Companies (MNCs) such as Google and Facebook that are attracted to India's large domestic consumer market.

Current State of India's Economy:

- India's GDP at current prices stood at USD 694.93 billion in the first quarter of FY22, as per the provisional estimates of gross domestic product for the first quarter of 2021-22.
- India is the fourth-largest unicorn base in the world with over 21 unicorns collectively valued at USD 73.2 billion.

Government Initiatives for Boosting Economy

- 'Make in India' and the National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE 2019)
- Production-linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) in Various Sectors
- **Major Telecom Sector Reforms:**
 1. Major telecom sector reforms have been approved in September 2021, which are expected to boost employment, growth, competition, and consumer interests.
 2. The rationalisation of adjusted gross revenue, the rationalisation of bank guarantees (BGs), and the **encouragement of spectrum sharing are among the key reforms.**

- **Deep Ocean Mission:**The Indian government approved the Deep Ocean Mission (DOM) in August 2021, with a budget outlay of Rs. 4,077 crore (USD 553.82 million) over the next five years.
- **Focus on Renewable Sources:**
 1. In order to generate energy, India is focusing on renewable sources. It plans to achieve 40% of its energy from non-fossil sources by 2030, up from 30% currently, and to increase its renewable energy capacity from to 175 gigatonnes (GW) by 2022.
 2. In line with this, India and the United Kingdom jointly launched a 'Roadmap 2030' in May 2021 to collaborate and combat climate change by 2030.

Way Forward

- On one hand, the sectors like manufacturing and construction recovered steadily in 2021, on the other hand, low-skilled individuals, women, self-employed people, and small firms were left behind.
- Infrastructure and manufacturing are the two pillars that should be used to push the growth structurally.
 1. However, infrastructure building or revival of the investment cycle, in general, would require the private sector to also start contributing.
 2. The fundamentals for a revival in private corporate and households' is emerging with financial institutions, especially banks, in a better position, corporates deleveraging, and a low-interest rate regime.
- The recovery of the Indian economy in FY22 totally depends on how steadily household incomes recover and activity in the informal sector and smaller firms normalise.
- India should also increase ease of business and ease of living to enable the private sector to create wealth over a long period of time.
- Participation of women in the workforce is a key driver of India's growth. Therefore India should increase women's participation in the workforce.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

New Bridge: India & Nepal

Recently, the Union Cabinet has cleared a plan to build a new bridge connecting India and Nepal over the Mahakali river and link Dharchula in Uttarakhand with Nepal's Dharchula.

Key Points

About

- The bridge will be completed within three years. It will strengthen the relationship between the two countries.
- India and Nepal share unique ties of friendship and cooperation.
- The construction of the bridge will help people living in Dharchula in Uttarakhand and in the territory of Nepal.

Mahakali River:

- It is also known as Sharda river or Kali Ganga in Uttarakhand.
- It joins Ghagra river in Uttar Pradesh, which is a tributary of Ganga.
- River Projects: Tanakpur hydro-electric project, Chameliya hydro-electric project, Sharda Barrage.

India - Nepal Relations

Historical Ties:

- Nepal is an important neighbour of India and occupies special significance in its foreign policy because of the geographic, historical, cultural and economic linkages/ties that span centuries.
- India and Nepal share similar ties in terms of Hinduism and Buddhism with Buddha's birthplace Lumbini located in present day Nepal.
- The two countries not only share an open border and unhindered movement of people, but they also have close bonds through marriages and familial ties, popularly known as Roti-Beti ka Rishta.
- The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations that exist between India and Nepal.
- Importance for India can be studied from two different angles: a) their strategic importance for India's national security, and b) their place in India's role perception in international politics.
- Rivers originating in Nepal feed the perennial river systems of India in terms of ecology and hydropower potential.

Trade and Economy:

- India is Nepal's largest trade partner and the largest source of foreign investments, besides providing transit for almost the entire third country trade of Nepal.

Connectivity:

- Nepal being a landlocked country, it is surrounded by India from three sides and one side is open towards Tibet which has very limited vehicular access.
- India-Nepal has undertaken various connectivity programs to enhance people-to-people linkages and promote economic growth and development.
 1. MOUs have been signed between both the governments for laying an electric rail track linking Kathmandu with Raxaul in India.
 2. India is looking to develop the inland waterways for the movement of cargo, within the framework of trade and transit arrangements, providing additional access to sea for Nepal calling it linking Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) with Sagar (Indian Ocean).

Defence Cooperation

- Bilateral defence cooperation includes assistance to Nepalese Army in its modernization through provision of equipment and training.
- The Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army are raised partly by recruitment from hill districts of Nepal.
- India from 2011, every year undertakes joint military exercise with Nepal known as Surya Kiran.

Cultural

- There have been initiatives to promote people-to-people contacts in the area of art & culture, academics and media with different local bodies of Nepal.
- India has signed three sister-city agreements for twinning Kathmandu-Varanasi, Lumbini-Bodhgaya and Janakpur-Ayodhya. A sister city or twin town relationship is a form of legal or social agreement between two geographically and politically distinct localities.

Humanitarian Assistance

- Nepal lies in a sensitive ecological fragile zone which is prone to earthquakes, floods causing massive damage to both life and money, whereby it remains the biggest recipient of India's humanitarian assistance.

Multilateral Partnership

- India and Nepal share multiple multilateral forums such as BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal), BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), Non Aligned Movement, and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) etc.

Issues & Challenges

- **China's Intervention:**
 1. As a landlocked nation, Nepal depended for many years on Indian imports, and India played an active role in Nepal's affairs.
 2. However, in recent years, Nepal has drifted away from India's influence, and China has gradually filled the space with investments, aid and loans.
 3. China considers Nepal a key partner in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and wants to invest in Nepal's infrastructure as part of its grand plans to boost global trade.
 4. Rising Nepal and China cooperation can undermine Nepal's distinction of buffer state between India and China.
 5. China on the other hand wants to avoid the formation of any Anti-China stance by the Tibetans living in Nepal.
- **Border Dispute:**
 1. The issue erupted in November 2019 when Nepal had released a new political map that claims Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh of Uttarakhand as part of Nepal's territory. The area of Susta (West Champaran district, Bihar) can also be noted in the new map.

Way Forward

- India should negotiate diplomatically to resolve the boundary dispute with Nepal under the aegis of International law on Trans-boundary Water Disputes. In this case, boundary dispute resolution between India and Bangladesh should serve as a model.
- India should engage more proactively with Nepal in terms of people to people engagement, bureaucratic engagement as well as political interactions.

- Mere differences shall not turn into disputes and both the countries should resolve the issues peacefully.

PRELIMS FACT**National Water Awards**

Recently, Uttar Pradesh bagged the first prize for efforts towards water conservation in the National Water Awards (NWA) 2020 organised by the Ministry of Jal Shakti. Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu bagged the second and third prizes, respectively, in the best state category.

Key points**About:**

- The awards are organised by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The Jal Shakti Ministry had launched the first 'National Water Award' in 2018.
- They facilitate a good opportunity for the start-ups as well as the leading organisations to engage with the senior policymakers on adopting the best water resources management practises in India.
- They focus on the good work and efforts made by individuals and organisations across the country, and the government's vision for the path to 'Jal Samridh Bharat'.

Objectives:

- To motivate individuals/organisations who are doing commendable work in the field of water resources conservation and management.
- To create awareness among the people about the importance of water and encourage them to adopt the best water usage practises.

Opportunities Provided:

- Start-ups, leading organisations and people can engage, deliberate and strengthen existing partnerships on issues concerning water conservation and management activities.

Need for Water Conservation and Management:

- Depletion of water resources due to overuse and decline in water supplies due to climate change is pushing India closer to the tipping point of water scarcity.
- Apart from these, several government policies especially pertaining to agriculture resulted in over-exploitation of water. These factors make India a water-stressed economy. In this context there is a need for water resource conservation and management.
- India's current water requirement is estimated to be around 1,100 billion cubic metre per year, which is projected to go up to 1,447 billion cubic metre by 2050.
- India constitutes 16 % of the world's population, but the country has only 4% of the world's freshwater resources. With the changing weather patterns and recurring droughts, India is water stressed.
 1. According to the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), with 230 billion metre cube of groundwater drawn out each year for irrigating agricultural lands in India, many parts of the country are experiencing rapid depletion of groundwater.
 2. The total estimated groundwater depletion in India is in the range of 122–199 billion metre cube.

Related Initiatives

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
2. Jal Kranti Abhiyan
3. Catch the Rain: National Water Mission
4. NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index
5. Jal Jeevan Mission
6. Atal Bhujal Yojana
7. **Jal Shakti Abhiyan**

Way Forward

People tend to neglect the importance of water conservation because in most places it is free of cost or charged nominally, so it is important for them to realise its importance and be aware of its degrading status.

Initiatives like National Water Awards, along with the other government initiatives will help to create that awareness and motivate them to adopt the best water usage practises which will help India in becoming 'Jal Samridh Bharat'.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) was a tectonic shift in the nature of government support to farmers in India. Evaluate its performance. (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a central sector scheme under the government of India which provides income support to the farmers and their families. PM-KISAN scheme was first implemented as the Rythu Bandhu scheme by the Government of Telangana where a certain amount was handed directly to the eligible farmers

Body**About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi**

- The scheme was started with a view to augment the income of the farmers by providing income support to all landholding farmers' families across the country, to enable them to take care of expenses related to agriculture and allied activities as well as domestic needs.
- Under the Scheme an amount of Rs.6000/- per year is transferred in three 4-monthly instalments of Rs.2000/- directly into the bank accounts of the farmers, subject to certain exclusion criteria relating to higher income status.
- The entire responsibility of identification of beneficiaries rests with the State / UT Governments.
- The Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land upto 2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded w.e.f. 01.06.2019 to cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings.

Success of PM-KISAN

- The revised Scheme is expected to cover around 2 crore more farmers, increasing the coverage of PM-KISAN to around 14.5 crore beneficiaries, with an estimated expenditure by Central Government of Rs. 87,217.50 crores for year 2019-20.
- Earlier, under the scheme, financial benefit has been provided to all Small and Marginal landholder farmer families with total cultivable holding upto 2 hectares with a benefit of Rs.6000 per annum per family payable in three equal instalments, every four months.
- Now the cash transfer is not linked to the size of the farmer's land, unlike Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme, under which farmers receive ₹8,000 per annum for every acre owned.
- Though what the programme offers is meagre, it promises some relief to poor farmers by partially supplementing their input costs or consumption needs.

Shortcomings reported

- **Practical Difficulties:** The benefits of PM-KISAN have not reached farmers in most parts of the country. There are 125 million farming households owning small and marginal holdings of land in the country, who constitute the scheme's original intended beneficiaries.
 1. However, at present, the list of beneficiaries includes only 32% (40.27 million) of these households.
 2. Further, a majority of the intended beneficiary households are yet to receive even their first instalment of ₹2,000. Only 27% (33.99 million) received the first instalment, and only 24% (29.76 million) received the second.
- In budgetary terms, only 17% of the estimated ₹75,000 crore expenditure has been spent.
- Structural Issues: PM-KISAN offers ₹6,000 a year per household in three instalments. Broadly speaking, this amounts to only about a tenth of the production cost per hectare or consumption expenditure for a poor household.
- While landless tenants have been left out in both the schemes (PM KISAN, Rythu Bandhu) the link with land size makes the support provided by the Telangana scheme more substantial.
- Uneven implementation: Moreover, implementation in certain States has been prioritized.
 1. P., for instance, accounts for one-third of total beneficiary households 33% (11.16 million) in the first instalment and 36% (10.84 million) in the second.
 2. About half of the State's SMF households have been covered, a total of 17 States have received a negligible share of the first instalment, accounting for less than 9%.
- Further, the scheme recognizes only landowners as farmers, Tenants who constitute 13.7% of farm households and incur the additional input cost of land rent, don't stand to gain anything if no part of the cultivated land is owned.

Way forward

- For the scheme to be effective, PM-KISAN needs to be uniformly implemented across regions.
- Cash transfers will cease to be effective if the state withdraws from its other long-term budgetary commitments in agricultural markets and areas of infrastructure such as irrigation.
- Subsidies for inputs, extension services, and procurement assurances provide a semblance of stability to agricultural production.
- There is a strong case to include landless tenants and other poor families to the scheme.
- PM-KISAN can be formulated in the side-lines of Odisha's Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme, which includes even poor rural households that do not own land.
- Moreover, though the scheme is conceptualized to supplement agricultural inputs, it ceases to be so without the necessary link with scale of production (farm size) built into it. It becomes, in effect, an income supplement to landowning households. Thus if income support is indeed the objective, the most deserving need to be given precedence.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. The World Press Freedom Index prepared by which of the following?

- a. Freedom of the Press Foundation
- b. Reporters Without Borders**
- c. Press Information Bureau
- d. World Economic Forum

Q2. Consider the following statements about the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

1. It is a UN agency mandated to aid and protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.
2. It was created in 1950 to address the refugee crisis resulted from World War II.
3. It is headquartered at Rome, Italy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q3. Kerala's Silver Line project was in news recently, is related to:

- a. Development of fisheries sector
- b. Productivity improvement in the wood industry
- c. New initiative for women empowerment
- d. Building a semi high-speed railway corridor**

Q4. Consider the following statements

1. National Disaster Response Force works under National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
2. The responsibility of managing disasters in India is that of the Central government.
3. The 'Nodal Ministry' in the central government for management of natural disasters is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only**
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1 and 2 only

Q5. With reference to river Brahmaputra, consider the following statements:

1. The source of river Brahmaputra is the same as that of Teesta but it flows through Assam.
2. It flows as Jamuna river before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

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**