

SOCIAL ISSUE**Anaemia Mukht Bharat**

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare provided information on Anaemia Mukht Bharat (AMB) strategy. In 2018, the Government of India launched the AMB strategy with the target to reduce anaemia in the vulnerable age groups such as women, children and adolescents.

- AMB is based on a life cycle approach, providing preventive and curative mechanisms through a 6X6X6 strategy including six target beneficiaries, six interventions and six institutional mechanisms for all stakeholders to implement the strategy.

What is Anaemia?

- It is a condition in which the number of red blood cells or their oxygen-carrying capacity is insufficient to meet physiologic needs, which vary by age, sex, altitude, smoking, and pregnancy status.
- Iron deficiency is the most common cause of anaemia, although other conditions, such as folate, vitamin B12 and vitamin A deficiencies, chronic inflammation, parasitic infections, and inherited disorders can all cause anaemia.
- In its severe form, it is associated with fatigue, weakness, dizziness and drowsiness. Pregnant women and children are particularly vulnerable.
- According to the National Family Health Survey 2019-20, Indian women and children are overwhelmingly anaemic. Under phase I, 22 states and UTs were surveyed and in a majority of these states and UTs, more than half the children and women were found to be anaemic.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), women in the reproductive age group and having haemoglobin levels lower than 12 grams per decilitre (g / dL), as well as children under five with haemoglobin levels lower than 11.0 g / dL are considered anaemic.

What are Other Government Initiatives for Controlling Anaemia?

- Health is a State subject and the primary responsibility for strengthening health care services including implementation of national programs lies with the respective State/UT government. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provides financial and technical support to States/UTs under the National Health Mission.
- **Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS):** This Programme is being implemented to meet the challenge of high prevalence and incidence of anaemia amongst adolescent girls and boys.
 1. The intervention under WIFS includes supervised weekly ingestion of Iron Folic Acid (IFA) tablets.
 2. To control worm infestation, biannual deworming with Albendazole is provided.
- **Health Management Information System & Mother Child Tracking System:** It is being implemented for reporting and tracking the cases of anaemic and severely anaemic pregnant women.
- **Universal Screening of Pregnant Women for Anaemia:** It is a part of Ante-Natal Care (ANC) and all pregnant women are provided iron and folic acid tablets during their ante-natal visits through the existing network of sub-centres and primary health centres and other health facilities as well as through outreach activities at Village Health & Nutrition Days (VHNDs).
- **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA):** It has been launched to focus on conducting special ANC check up on 9th of every month with the help of Medical officers to detect and treat cases of anaemia.
- **Operationalization of Blood Bank** in District Hospitals and Blood Storage Unit in sub district facilities such as Sub-Divisional Hospital/ Community Health Centers is being taken to tackle complications due to severe anaemia.

What are the Highlights of AMB Strategy?



ANEMIA MUKH BHARAT 6x6x6 STRATEGY



Children, 6-59 months of age



Adolescent girls and boys (10-19 years of age)



Pregnant women



Children, 5-9 years of age



Women of reproductive age (20-24 years of age)



Lactating mothers (of 0-6 months child)

6 Beneficiaries



6 Interventions

Prophylactic Iron Folic Acid Supplementation



Deworming



Intensified year-round Behaviour Change Communication Campaign (Solid Body, Smart Mind) including ensuring delayed cord clamping



Texting of Anemia using digital methods and point of care treatment



Mandatory Provision of Iron Folic Acid fortified foods in public health programmes



Addressing non-nutritional causes of anemia in endemic pockets, with special focus on malaria, haemoglobinopathies and fluorosis



6 Institutional Mechanisms



National Anemia Mukh Bharat Unit



Intra Ministerial Coordination



Strengthening Supply Chain and Logistics



Convergence with Other Ministries



National Centre of Excellence and Advanced Research on Anemia Control



Anemia Mukh Bharat Dashboard and Digital Portal – One Stop Shop for Anemia

IAS
UPSC/OPSC

GOVERNANCE

Criminalization of Politics

According to data compiled by the Amicus Curiae, a total of 4,984 criminal cases involving legislators were pending in various courts across the country as of 1st December, 2021. The Amicus Curiae was appointed by the Supreme Court for helping the court in setting up special courts to fast-track cases against MPs and MLAs.

- This trend highlights the increasing instance of criminalization of politics.
- An amicus curiae (literally, "friend of the court") is someone who is not a party to a case and may or may not have been solicited by a party and who assists a court by offering information, expertise, and bearing on issues of the case.

What is Criminalization of Politics?

- The criminalization of politics means the participation of criminals in politics which includes that criminals can contest in the elections and get elected as members of the Parliament and the State legislature.
- It takes place primarily due to the nexus between politicians and criminals.

What are the Legal Aspects of Disqualification of Criminal Candidates?

- In this regard, Indian Constitution does not specify as to what disqualifies a person from contesting elections for the Parliament, Legislative assembly or any other legislature.
- The Representation of Peoples Act 1951 mentions the criteria for disqualifying a person for contesting an election of the legislature.

1. Section 8 of the act, i.e. disqualification on conviction for certain offences, according to which an individual punished with a jail term of more than two years cannot stand in an election for six years after the jail term has ended.
2. The law does not bar individuals who have criminal cases pending against them from contesting elections therefore the disqualification of candidates with criminal cases depends on their conviction in these cases.

What are the Reasons for Criminalization of Politics?

- **Lack of Enforcement:** Several laws and court judgments have not helped much, due to the lack of enforcement of laws and judgments.
- **Vested Interests:** Publishing of the entire criminal history of candidates fielded by political parties may not be very effective, as a major chunk of voters tend to vote through a narrow prism of community interests like caste or religion.
- **Use of Muscle and Money Power:** Candidates with serious records seem to do well despite their public image, largely due to their ability to finance their own elections and bring substantive resources to their respective parties. Also, sometimes voters are left with no options, as all competing candidates have criminal records.

What are the Effects of Criminalization of Politics?

- **Against the Principle of Free and Fair Election:** It limits the choice of voters to elect a suitable candidate. It is against the ethos of free and fair election which is the bedrock of a democracy.
- **Affecting Good Governance:** The major problem is that the law-breakers become law-makers, this affects the efficacy of the democratic process in delivering good governance. These unhealthy tendencies in the democratic system reflect a poor image of the nature of India's state institutions and the quality of its elected representatives.
- **Affecting Integrity of Public Servants:** It also leads to increased circulation of black money during and after elections, which in turn increases corruption in society and affects the working of public servants.
- **Causes Social Disharmony:** It introduces a culture of violence in society and sets a bad precedent for the youth to follow and reduces people's faith in democracy as a system of governance.

Way Forward

- **State Funding of Elections:** Various committees (Dinesh Goswami, Inderjeet Committee) on the electoral reforms have recommended state funding of elections which will curb use of black money to a large extent and thereby will have a significant impact on limiting criminalization of politics.
- **Strengthening Election Commission:** Regulating the affairs of a political party is essential for a cleaner electoral process. Therefore, it is imperative to strengthen the Election Commission of India.
- **Vigilant Voters:** Voters also need to be vigilant about misuse of money, gifts and other inducements during elections.
- **Proactive Role of Judiciary:** Given the reluctance by the political parties to curb criminalisation of politics and its growing detrimental effects on Indian democracy, Indian courts must now seriously consider banning people accused with serious criminal charges from contesting elections.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

Second Phase of CPEC

Recently, Pakistan signed a new agreement with China to begin the second phase of the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Earlier, Pakistan had discussed Taliban-led Afghanistan joining the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) infrastructure project.

- The second phase primarily revolves around Special Economic Zones (SEZs) development and industrialisation.

What is CPEC?

- CPEC is a 3,000-km long route of infrastructure projects connecting China's northwest Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and the Gwadar Port in the western province of Balochistan in Pakistan.

- It is a bilateral project between Pakistan and China, intended to promote connectivity across Pakistan with a network of highways, railways, and pipelines accompanied by energy, industrial, and other infrastructure development projects.
- It will pave the way for China to access the Middle East and Africa from Gwadar Port, enabling China to access the Indian Ocean and in return China will support development projects in Pakistan to overcome the latter's energy crises and stabilising its faltering economy.
- CPEC is a part of the Belt and Road Initiative. The BRI, launched in 2013, aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.

What is India's Stand on CPEC?

- India has been severely critical of the CPEC, as it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which is a disputed territory between India and Pakistan. India has also protested to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- India is a member of the Quad (India, the US, Australia and Japan) which can provide realistic alternatives for countries looking for infrastructure and be an alternative to China. The member countries of the Quad have come up with some alternatives. For Example: Blue Dot Network (BDN) and Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative'.

What will be CPEC's Implications for India?

- **India's Sovereignty:** India has continuously opposed the project since it passes through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir territory of Gilgit-Baltistan – a claim opposed by Pakistan.
 1. The corridor is also perceived to be an alternative economic road link for the Kashmir Valley lying on the Indian side of the border.
 2. Most key players in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, have expressed optimism about the project.
 3. There have been calls by local business and political leaders to declare Kashmir on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) a 'Special Economic Zone'.
 4. However, a well-connected Gilgit-Baltistan that attracts industrial development and foreign investment, if CPEC proves a success, will further consolidate the region's perception as internationally recognised Pakistani territory, diminishing India's claim over the 73,000 sq km piece of land which is home to more than 1.8 million people.
- **Chinese Control Over Trade Via Sea:** Major US ports on the East Coast depend on the Panama Canal to trade with China.
 1. Once CPEC becomes fully functional, China will be in a position to offer a 'shorter and more economical' trade route (avoiding travel through the entire Western Hemisphere) to most North and Latin American enterprises.
 2. This will give China the power to dictate the terms by which the international movement of goods will take place between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans.
- **Chinese String of Pearls:** China has been increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean with the 'String of Pearls' ambition: A term coined by the Americans and often used by Indian defence analysts to refer to a Chinese game-plan of encircling India through a network of airfields and ports. With an existing presence in Chittagong port (Bangladesh), Hambantota port (Sri Lanka), Port Sudan (Sudan), Maldives, Somalia and Seychelles, a control of Gwadar port establishes complete dominance of the Indian ocean by the Communist nation.
- **Emergence of Pakistan as an Outsourcing Destination:** It is poised to speed up Pakistan's economic progress.
 1. Pakistani exports, mainly in the textile and construction material industry, compete directly with those of India in the US and UAE – two of the top three trading partners of both countries.
 2. With the supply of raw material from China becoming easier, Pakistan will be suitably placed to become a regional market leader in these sectors – mainly at the cost of Indian export volumes.
- **Stronger BRI and Chinese Dominance in Trade Leadership:** China's BRI project that focuses on the trade connectivity between China and the rest of Eurasia through a network of ports, roads and railways has been often seen as China's plan to dominate the region politically. CPEC is one giant step in the same direction. A China that is more accepted and integrated with the rest of the global economy will have a better say in the United Nations and with individual nations, which

may prove to be bad news for an India aspiring to acquire a permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

Way Forward

- India's future strategy thrust on CPEC must be based on a careful reassessment of the potential benefits as well as disadvantages from the BRI project.
- India should speed up work on development of its own strategic projects like, Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM) and Chabahar Port.
- The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor is an India-Japan economic cooperation agreement, it can provide India great strategic benefits and counter China.

PRELIMS FACT

Vande Bharat Trains

In the Union Budget for 2022-2023, the Finance Minister has proposed the development and manufacture of 400 new Vande Bharat trains in the next three years. The 400 trains carry a potential investment of Rs 50,000 crore while the current Vande Bharats are being made at Rs 106 crore per train set of 16 cars, at 2018 pricing.

- It comes in addition to the current plan — to be able to run 75 Vande Bharats across India by Independence Day in 2023.

What are Vande Bharat Trains?

- It is an indigenously designed and manufactured semi high speed, self-propelled train that is touted as the next major leap for the Indian Railways in terms of speed and passenger convenience since the introduction of Rajdhani trains.
- The first Vande Bharat was manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai, as part of the 'Make in India' programme, at a cost of about Rs. 100 crore.
- The Vande Bharat was India's first attempt at adaptation of the train set technology compared with conventional systems of passenger coaches hauled by separate locomotives. The train set configuration, though complex, is faster, easier to maintain, consumes less energy, and has greater flexibility in train operation.
- Currently, two Vande Bharat Expresses are operational — one between New Delhi and Varanasi and the other from New Delhi to Katra.
- The 400 new trains will have "better efficiency" and railways are looking at making several of these trainsets with aluminium instead of steel. An aluminium body will make each trainset around 40-80 tonnes lighter than a current Vande Bharat and this will mean lower consumption of energy as well as better speed potential.

What are the Features of the Vande Bharat Trains?

- These trains, dubbed as Train 18 during the development phase, operate without a locomotive and are based on a propulsion system called distributed traction power technology, by which each car of the train set is powered.
- Its coaches incorporate passenger amenities including on-board WiFi entertainment, GPS-based passenger information system, CCTVs, automatic doors in all coaches, rotating chairs and bio-vacuum type toilets like in aircraft.
- It can achieve a maximum speed of 160 kmph due to faster acceleration and deceleration, reducing journey time by 25% to 45%.
- It also has an intelligent braking system with power regeneration for better energy efficiency thereby making it cost, energy and environment efficient.

What is the Significance?

- The sheer manufacturing of 400 of these trainset equipment in three years will be additional employment generation to the tune of 10,000-15,000.
- The pumping in around Rs 50,000 crore into the country's rolling stock industry, will give a big boost in the sectors of component manufacturing, supplies etc.
- It will also improve railway finances and operational efficiency.

Way Forward

- Indian railways is moving towards a new era of travel experience with upgraded next-generation trains. At a time when low cost airlines and smooth road networks are offering stiff competition, the new trains can help railways retain traffic and even grow it.

- Timely execution of the ambitious project and keeping in mind the demand for various classes of travel will go a long way in ensuring the success of the Vande Bharat project.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. What is the Minimum Support Price (MSP) system for agricultural commodities in India? Is MSP System helping the farmers, or is failing them? Critically examine (250 Words)

Introduction

Minimum Support Price (MSP) is the rate at which the government buys grains from farmers. Currently, it fixes MSPs for 23 crops grown in both Kharif and Rabi seasons. The government recently hiked the MSP for wheat by Rs. 40 to Rs. 2,015 per quintal and for mustard seed by Rs. 400 to Rs. 5,050 per quintal for the current crop year in order to boost crop area as well as income of farmers.

Body
Yes, MSP helps farmers to an extent

- MSP has been beneficial in transferring incomes to rural areas and to counter farm level inflation.
- It can also counter the agricultural distress brought on by natural hazards in the country. It gives farmers hope of earning more in the new sowing season.
- In the last few years, India has become a net importer of pulses. Massive hike in the MSP of these crops will encourage the farmers to grow nutritional crops. It will help in changing the cropping pattern which was long due.
- A higher MSP regime will also help in achieving the Government's target of doubling farmer's income by 2022.
- It also acts as an incentive for farmers to produce the crop which is in short supply.
- Higher profits for the farmer will also help them to invest in necessary infrastructure and equipment.
- The MSP to some extent will protect the farmer by guaranteeing a minimum floor price so that they can plan in advance for the next season.

However, MSP fails the farmers more

The trouble with MSP is that while it is touted as an all-important factor for farmers promising an instant rise in their income and stability, it also has many drawbacks in implementation. This affects the price realisation of farmers, in reality for several reasons.

- **Methodology:** MSP covers numerous costs such as the cost of sowing (A2) and labour (FL). These considerations are controversial with suggestions that it should be based on comprehensive costs (C2), which also include land rent costs.
- **Inflation:** Too much of a hike on MSP either paves way for inflationary effects on the economy, with a rise in prices of food grains and vegetables, or loss to government treasury if it decides to sell at a lower price as compared to the higher MSP it bought at.
- **Diverse factors:** MSP is a nationwide single price policy. However, the actual costing for production varies from place to place, more severely so in areas lacking irrigation facilities and infrastructure. Thus, not all farmers have equal benefits.
- **Procurement at MSP is flawed:** First, procurement of wheat and paddy for meeting the requirement of the public distribution system (PDS) is undertaken largely by state governments.
 1. Of the total procurement of wheat and paddy from farmers, the Food Corporation of India's (FCI's) share is less than 10%.
 2. In the north-east and many other states, procurement operations are almost non-existent and farmers are forced to sell below MSP.
 3. As the experiences of these schemes show, the benefit of higher MSPs for kharif crops or rabi, is unlikely to be available to most farmers as the states lack adequate storage capacity, working capital and manpower for undertaking large-scale procurement of all commodities.
 4. The MSP-based procurement system is also dependent on middlemen, commission agents and APMC officials, which smaller farmers find difficult to get access to.
- **Agri-Infrastructure:** Hiking the MSP without investing in infrastructure is just a short-term play. While it does deliver immediate results, long-term developments to back-it up are also important.

- **Environmental harm:** It degrades the soil because of irrespective of the soil condition, some crops are preferred which have MSP over them which results in exploitation of ground water resources, alkalinity, decrease in the production of the crops in long run and much harm to environment.

Conclusion

The government should shift its focus from providing only price support to farmers and focus on building better infrastructure, minimizing the gap between farmers and the market, land reforms, policy reforms to increase flow of credit to farmers, establishing food-processing industries for perishable goods, providing better irrigation facilities etc so, that agriculture emerges as a viable means of sustenance.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. With reference to Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), consider the following statements:

1. It was established in the year 1966.
2. It is headquartered in Beijing.
3. The regional members hold 75% of the total voting power in the Bank.

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

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. River Cauvery rises on Brahmagiri Hill of the Western Ghats.
2. Some of its tributaries are Kumaradhara, Shishila Hole and Gundiya Hole.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only**
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. INS Vikrant (IAC-I) is the first aircraft carrier built in India.
2. It is constructed by the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) for the Indian Navy.

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

Q4. Recently, Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) was signed between which of the following nations?

- a. Australia and Japan**
- b. India and China
- c. Japan and South Korea
- d. India and Bhutan

Q5. The Global State of Democracy Report, 2021 was recently released by the

- a. National Democratic Institute
- b. Democracy International
- c. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance**
- d. National Endowment for Democracy