

SOCIAL NEWS

SAMARTH Initiative

Recently, on the occasion of International Women's Day 2022, the Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), launched a Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women - "SAMARTH".

What is the SAMARTH Initiative?

- Under the Samarth initiative of the Ministry, following benefits will be available to aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs:
 1. 20% Seats in free Skill Development Programs organised under skill development schemes of the Ministry will be allocated for Women.
 2. 20% of MSME Business Delegations sent to domestic & international exhibitions under the schemes for Marketing Assistance implemented by the Ministry will be dedicated to women owned MSMEs.
 3. 20% Discount on annual processing fee on National Small Industries Corporation's (NSIC) Commercial Schemes. NSIC is a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of MSME.
 4. Special Drive for registration of women-owned MSMEs under Udyam Registration.
- Through this initiative, the Ministry of MSME is focusing on providing Skill Development and Market Development Assistance to women.
 1. More than 7500 women candidates from rural and sub-urban areas will be trained in the FY 2022-23.
 2. Besides, thousands of women will be getting marketing opportunities to showcase their products in domestic and international exhibitions.
- Also, to enhance the participation of women entrepreneurs in Public Procurement, a special discount of 20% shall also be offered on annual processing fee on NSIC's following commercial schemes during the year 2022-23:
 1. Single Point Registration Scheme
 2. Raw Material Assistance and Bill Discounting
 3. Tender Marketing
 4. B2B Portal msmemart.com

What is International Women's Day?

About:

- It is celebrated annually on 8th March. It includes:
 1. Celebration of women's achievements,
 2. Raising awareness about women's equality,
 3. Lobbying for accelerated gender parity,
 4. Fundraising for female-focused charities, etc.

Brief History:

- Women's Day was first celebrated back in 1911 by Clara Zetkin, who was a German. The roots of the celebration had been in the labour movement.
- It was only in 1913, however, that the celebrations were shifted to 8th March, and it has remained that way ever since.
- International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time by the United Nations (UN) in 1975. In December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a UNs Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions.

2022 Theme:

- 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'.

Related Data:

- According to the UN, legal restrictions have kept 2.7 billion women from accessing the same choice of jobs as men.
 1. As of 2019, less than 25% of parliamentarians were women.
 2. One in three women experience gender-based violence.
- In 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, female labour force participation in India was 20.5%, according to International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates. Comparable estimates for males was 76%.
- In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (which measures progress towards gender parity), India is one of the worst performers in South Asia, it is now ranked 140 among 156 countries in 2021.

- As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5, as many as 57% women aged 15-49 were anaemic in 2019-21, compared to 53% in 2015-16.

What are the Safeguards for Women in India?

- Constitutional Safeguards:**
 - Fundamental Rights:** It guarantees all Indians the right to equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State on the basis of gender (Article 15(1)) and special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women (Article 15(3)).
 - Fundamental Duties:** The Constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through Articles 51 (A)(e) to renounce practices derogatory to dignity of women.
- Legislative Framework:**
 - Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** It provides victims of domestic violence with a means for practical remedy through prosecution.
 - The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** It prohibits the request, payment or acceptance of a dowry.
 - The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013:** This legislative act seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work.
- Related Schemes:** Mahila e-haat, Women Technology Park, Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI), etc.

Are there any World Conferences on Women?

- The UN has organised 4 world conferences on women. These took place in
 - Mexico City, 1975
 - Copenhagen, 1980
 - Nairobi, 1985
 - Beijing, 1995
- The 4th World Conference on Women (WCW), held in Beijing, was one of the largest ever gatherings of the UNs, and a critical turning point in the world's focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
 - The Beijing Declaration is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality.
 - It sets strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern like women and health, women in power and decision-making, the girl-child, women and the environment.
- Recently, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has proposed a Temporary Basic Income (TBI) for poor women in developing countries to help them cope with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and alleviate the economic pressures they face every day.

GOVERNANCE

Democracy Report 2022

According to the latest report from the V-Dem Institute at Sweden's University of Gothenburg, the level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2021 is down to 1989 levels, with the democratic gains of the post-Cold War period eroding rapidly in the last few years.

- The Report is titled 'Democracy Report 2022: Autocratisation Changing Nature?'.
 - Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) produces the largest global dataset on democracy with over 30 million data points for 202 countries from 1789 to 2021.
 - Earlier, the Global State of Democracy Report, 2021 was released by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA).

What Parameters were used to Assess the Status of a Democracy?

- The report classifies countries into four regime types based on their score in the Liberal Democratic Index (LDI): Liberal Democracy, Electoral Democracy, Electoral Autocracy, and Closed Autocracy.
- The LDI captures both liberal (individual and minority rights) and electoral aspects (free and fair elections) of a democracy based on 71 indicators that make up the Liberal Component Index (LCI) and the Electoral Democracy Index (EDI).
 - The LCI measures aspects such as protection of individual liberties and legislative constraints on the executive, while the EDI considers indicators that guarantee free and fair elections such as freedom of expression and freedom of association.
 - In addition, the LDI also uses an Egalitarian Component Index (to what extent different social groups are equal), Participatory Component Index (health of citizen groups, civil society organisations), and Deliberative Component Index (whether political decisions are taken

through public reasoning focused on common good or through emotional appeals, solidarity attachments, coercion).

What are the Main Findings of the Report?

Top Performance:

- Sweden topped the LDI index, other Scandinavian countries such as Denmark and Norway, along with Costa Rica and New Zealand make up the top five in liberal democracy rankings.

India's Performance:

- India is part of a broader global trend of an anti-plural political party driving a country's autocratisation.
- It was ranked 93rd in the LDI, India figures in the "bottom 50%" of countries.
- It has slipped further down in the Electoral Democracy Index, to 100, and even lower in the Deliberative Component Index, at 102.
- In South Asia, India is ranked below Sri Lanka (88), Nepal (71), and Bhutan (65) and above Pakistan (117) in the LDI.

Spreading Autocratisation:

- Autocratisation is spreading rapidly, with a record of 33 countries autocratising.
- Signaling a sharp break from an average of 1.2 coups per year, 2021 saw a record 6 coups, resulting in 4 new autocracies: Chad, Guinea, Mali and Myanmar.
- While the number of liberal democracies stood at 42 in 2012, their number has shrunk to their lowest level in over 25 years, with just 34 countries and 13% of the world population living in liberal democracies.
- Closed autocracies, or dictatorships, rose from 25 to 30 between 2020 and 2021.

Electoral Autocracy Most Common Regime Type:

- The world today has 89 democracies and 90 autocracies, electoral autocracy remains the most common regime type, accounting for 60 countries and 44% of the world population or 3.4 billion people.
- Electoral democracies were the second most common regime, accounting for 55 countries and 16% of the world population.

What does the report say about the Changing Nature of Autocratisation?

Biggest Drivers of Autocratisation:

- **One of the biggest drivers of autocratisation is "toxic polarisation".**
 1. Polarisation has been defined as a phenomenon that erodes respect of counter-arguments and associated aspects of the deliberative component of democracy.
 2. It is a dominant trend in 40 countries, as opposed to 5 countries that showed rising polarisation in 2011.
 3. Toxic levels of polarisation contribute to electoral victories of anti-pluralist leaders and the empowerment of their autocratic agendas.
 4. Noting that "polarisation and autocratisation are mutually reinforcing", the report states that "measures of polarisation of society, political polarisation, and political parties' use of hate speech tend to systematically rise together to extreme levels."

Tools used to Sharpen Polarisation:

- "Misinformation" has been identified as a key tool deployed by autocratising governments to sharpen polarisation and shape domestic and international opinion.
- Repression of civil society and censorship of media were other favoured tools of autocratising regimes.
 1. While freedom of expression declined in a record 35 countries in 2021, with only 10 showing improvement, repression of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) worsened in 44 countries over the past ten years, "putting it at the very top of the indicators affected by autocratisation".
 2. Also, in 37 countries, direct government control over CSOs' existence moved in an authoritarian direction — "evidence of the far-ranging weakening of civil society around the world."
 3. Decisive autonomy for the Electoral Management Body (EMB) deteriorated in 25 countries.

2. Brahmaputra (NW2) gets connected with Ganga (NW1)

Recently, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways received the maiden voyage of food-grains from Patna to Pandu port via Bangladesh in Guwahati (Assam).

- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is planning to run a fixed schedule sailing between NW1 and NW2 heralding a new age of inland water transport for Assam & the Northeast India.
- The Inland Vessels Bill, 2021, was also approved to regulate safety, security and registration of inland vessels.

What is the Significance of this Achievement?

- The start of cargo movement through ships through Indo Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBRP) marks the beginning of a new age of economic prosperity for the whole region of Northeast.
- This will pave the way for growth & development of inland water transport.
- This will also provide the business community a viable, economic & ecological alternative and will also play a pivotal role in energising India's northeast as the engine of growth.
- The sustained effort to rejuvenate the historical trade routes via Bangladesh got a fillip under PM Gati Shakti.
 1. It has been envisioned that Northeast will slowly turn & convert into a connectivity hub.
 2. The integrated development plan, under PM Gati Shakti, has been envisioned in order to amp up swift movement of cargo over Brahmaputra.

What are Inland Waterways?

About:

- India has about 14,500 km of navigable waterways which consist of rivers, canals, backwaters, creeks, etc.
- As per the National Waterways Act 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways (NWs).
 1. **NW-1:** Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System (Prayagraj-Haldia) with length 1620 km is the longest National Waterway in India.
 2. **The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** is implementing the Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) for capacity augmentation of navigation on the Haldia-Varanasi stretch of Ganga (part of NW-1) with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank.

Related Steps taken:

- The waterways have also been proposed to be linked to the eastern and western Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs), as well as the Sagarmala Project, which aims to promote port-led direct and indirect development.
- Further, the provisions of the Indo-Bangladesh (Sonamura-Daudkandi) and Indo-Myanmar protocol (Kaladan) permitting transshipment of goods through Bangladesh and Myanmar waters – which, in many cases, are a continuum of India's inland waterways – enabling quicker shipments and deeper market penetration in India's North East.

What is the Scope of Inland Waterways in India?

- About 55 million tonnes of cargo is being moved annually by IWT (Inland Water Transport), a fuel-efficient and environment-friendly mode. However, freight transportation by waterways is highly underutilized in the country as compared to developed countries.
- Its operations are currently restricted to a few stretches in the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly rivers, the Brahmaputra, the Barak river (northeastern India), the rivers in Goa, the backwaters in Kerala, inland waters in Mumbai and the deltaic regions of the Godavari - Krishna rivers.
- Besides these organized operations by mechanized vessels, country boats of various capacities also operate in various rivers and canals and substantial quantum of cargo and passengers are transported in this unorganized sector as well.
- In India, IWT has the potential to supplement the overburdened railways and congested roadways. In addition to cargo movement, the IWT sector also provides a convenient function in related activities such as carriage of vehicles {on Roll-on-Roll-off (Ro-Ro) mode of cross ferry} and tourism.

What are the Advantages of an Inland Waterways Network?

Cheaper Mode of Transportation:

- Waterways are a cheaper mode of transportation vis-à-vis the available alternatives, significantly reducing the point-to-point cost of goods transportation.
- It also reduces time, cost of transportation of goods and cargos, as well as congestion and accidents on highways.
- The network requires no green field investment, but only capex (capital expenditure) for improvement/upgradation.

Seamless Interconnectivity:

They are expected to also “help create seamless interconnectivity connecting hinterlands along navigable river coasts and coastal routes” and “are likely to play a crucial role in connecting the north-eastern states to the mainland.”

What are the Implementation Challenges?

- **No Navigability throughout the Year:** Some rivers are seasonal and do not offer navigability through the year. Around 20 out of the 111 identified national waterways have reportedly been found unviable.
- **Intensive Capital and Maintenance Dredging:** All the identified waterways require intensive capital and maintenance dredging, which could be resisted by the local community on environmental grounds, including displacement fears, thereby posing implementation challenges.
- **Other Uses of water:** Water also has important competing uses, viz. need for living as well as for irrigation, power generation etc. It would not be possible for the local government/others to overlook these needs.
- **Exclusive Jurisdiction of the Central Government:** The exclusive jurisdiction of the Central Government is only in regard to shipping and navigation on inland waterways declared to be 'national waterways' by an act of Parliament. Utilisation/sailing of vessels, in other waterways, is within the ambit of the concurrent list or is in the jurisdiction of the respective state governments.

Way Forward

- Water being a scarce resource with competing needs, the use of water for transport may be difficult to justify. However, considering the various advantages and taking into account the commercial viability, the numerous opportunities for employment and economic development, the National Waterways can be effectively used as the way forward.
- An effective waterways network would necessitate drawing up a well-coordinated strategy on lines of complementarity between the national network and other waterways, not declared as such, as well as between waterways and roadways/railways. The strategy should closely look into the various undercurrents, including competing uses/needs, possible local resistance and also work closely and in coordination with local governments for quick and successful implementation of this important national project.

PRELIMS FACT

SLINEX-22

The Ninth Edition of India - Sri Lanka Bilateral Maritime Exercise SLINEX (Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise) is being conducted at Visakhapatnam. The 8th edition of SLINEX was conducted off Trincomalee, Sri Lanka in October 2020.

What are the Key Points?

About:

- The exercise is being conducted in two phases, the Harbour Phase at Visakhapatnam followed by the Sea Phase in the Bay of Bengal.
 1. The Harbour Phase would include professional, cultural, sporting and social exchanges.
 2. Sea Phase will include surface and anti-air weapon firing exercises, seamanship evolutions, aviation operations including cross deck flying, advanced tactical manoeuvres and special forces operations at sea.

Fleet:

- Sri Lanka Navy will be represented by SLNS Sayurala, an advanced offshore patrol vessel and the Indian Navy by INS Kirch, a guided missile corvette.
- Other participants from the Indian Navy,
 1. INS Jyoti, a Fleet support tanker.
 2. Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).
 3. Seaking and Chetak Helicopters.
 4. Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

Aim:

It aims to enhance interoperability, improve mutual understanding and exchange best practices and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations between both navies.

SLINEX exemplifies the deep maritime engagement between India and Sri Lanka and has grown in scope over the years to strengthen mutual cooperation, in consonance with India's policy of 'Neighbourhood First' and vision of 'Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)'.

What are the other Exercises between India and Sri Lanka?

- Exercise MITRA SHAKTI (Military Exercise)
- Dosti Trilateral Exercise (Coast guard India, Maldives and Sri Lanka).

2.Exercise Vayu Shakti

Amid the deepening crisis in Ukraine, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has decided to postpone its firepower demonstration, Exercise Vayu Shakti. The exercise was scheduled in the Pokhran ranges in Rajasthan. The last edition of Vayu Shakti was held in February 2019.

What is Ex Vayu Shakti?

- It is a triennial exercise once every three year. It is aimed at showcasing the capability of the IAF to conduct full spectrum operations (Day and Night) , and to see the participation of aircraft and helicopters, transport aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles.
- The frontline aircraft in the IAF inventory includes:
 1. Russian SU-30MKI and MiG-29UPG fighters,
 2. French Rafale and Mirage 2000,
 3. American C-130 and C-17 transport aircraft, AH-64E Apache attack helicopters and CH-47F Chinook heavy-lift helicopters,
 4. Indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (Tejas), Advanced Light Helicopter (Dhruv) and the Light Combat Helicopter.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. 'Climate change is adding to complexities of monsoon predictions at regional and local levels'. In this context, briefly describe how the Monsoon mission will help improve the overall understanding of Monsoon. (150 Words)

Introduction

Under the Monsoon Mission, Ministry of Earth sciences has developed the state-of-the-art weather and climate prediction models, which are now in operational use. These models include models for short range to medium range (1-10 days), extended range (10days to 30 days) and seasonal (up to one season). The models developed under the National Monsoon Mission (NMM) have shown very high skill in predicting important weather events on different time scales during the last 3years.

With climate change it has become more and more unpredictable to accurately estimate the arrival of monsoon, and other vagaries of monsoon.

Body

Issues with climate change and monsoon prediction

- The available records of climate and rainfall in India have aided scientists to reconstruct the behaviour of Monsoon in the past six decades and the results have been surprising as well as complex.
- But with climate change and events such as La nina, El nino, it is becoming increasingly difficult to predict weather conditions such as cloudbursts etc.

About National Monsoon Mission:

- The National Monsoon Mission was launched in 2012.
- It aims to develop a state-of-the-art dynamical prediction system for monsoon rainfall on different time scales.
- The mission falls under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- The responsibility of execution and coordination of the mission is bestowed upon the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.
- Climate Forecast System (CFS) of NCEP, USA has been identified as the basic modelling system for providing long range forecasting (seasonal prediction of Indian Monsoon). Further, the Unified Model (UM), developed by the United Kingdom Meteorological Office (UKMO), UK has been identified for short to medium range prediction
- **Targets:** Development of a seamless prediction system using monsoon mission model, on different time scales, like Seasonal (for whole Monsoon season), Extended range (up-to 4 weeks), Short range prediction (up-to 5days).
 1. Initiate and coordinate working partnership between Indian and foreign institutes to develop a system for prediction of extremes and climate applications
 2. Develop and implement system for climate applications having social impacts (such as agriculture, flood forecast, extreme events forecast, wind energy, etc.)
 3. Advanced data assimilation system for preparing high quality data for model predictions.

Significant achievements due to monsoon mission

- Setting up of an advanced prediction system for Seasonal prediction; Extended range prediction and Very high-resolution Short-range prediction.
- Commissioning of a Global Ensemble Forecast System (GEFS) for short and medium range prediction at 12km. The Cyclone track and intensity prediction has also shown a steady improvement over the last three years.
- The operationalization of Monsoon Mission dynamical model (MMCFS) to prepare operational seasonal forecast of monsoon rainfall and temperatures during the hot and cold weather seasons over India.

- Use of MMCFS and extended range prediction system for preparing regional seasonal forecast outlook for south Asia under WMO recognised Regional Climate Center and South Asia Seasonal Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF) activities.
- Development of an algorithm to monitor and predict the Monsoon Intra-seasonal Oscillations (MISO) and Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) on the extended range.
- Development of an index to predict the genesis and evolution of tropical cyclones and other cyclonic disturbances over the north Indian Ocean.
- Probabilistic Quantitative Precipitation Forecast over all the Indian river basin have been operationally implemented.
- Probabilistic (percentile based) forecast for extreme wind, precipitation have been established.
- GFS/GEFS forecasts have been extensively used to provide guidance to Forest fire possibility and also to Renewable Energy Sectors namely, wind and solar.
- Development of a high-resolution regional re-analysis product, IMDAA at very high resolution of 12km.

Conclusion

- Several scientists have been trained for modelling & forecasts through Monsoon Mission Program and capacity building activities have been done through targeted trainings. A remarkable improvement in the skill of the forecasts especially in the short to medium range has been noticed.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements about Organization of Islamic Cooperation:

1. It is an international organization founded in 1956.
2. It is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations.
3. Its permanent Secretariat is located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

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 about SWAMITVA scheme:

1. The scheme is piloted by the Ministry of Rural Development.
2. The scheme is for surveying the land parcels in rural inhabited area using Drone technology.
3. The scheme is proposed as a Central Sector scheme.

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. Consider the following statements about Medaram Jatara:

1. It is the second-largest fair of India.
2. It is celebrated in the state of Telangana.
3. It is celebrated once in two years in the month of "Vaisakha".

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

Q4. Formosa Strait separates:

- a. Spain from Morocco
- b. Australia from New Zealand
- c. China from Taiwan**
- d. Indonesia from Singapore

Q5. The Global Risk Report is published by which of the following?

- a. Financial Action Task Force
- b. United Nations Security Council
- c. International Criminal Police Organization
- d. World Economic Forum**