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SOCIAL ISSUES

WOMEN

SAFE CITY PROJECT

News Excerpt:

Delhi is preparing to execute the Safe City Project, which aims to improve security for inhabitants, particularly women.

About Safe City Project:

- The Safe City Project is a Ministry of Home Affairs project funded by the Nirbhaya Fund that aims to create a safe, secure, and empowering environment for women and girls in public settings.
- The project is being executed in eight metro cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, and Bengaluru.
- CCTV cameras will be placed as part of the project, as will a command-and-control centre with video analytics, AI, machine learning, and facial recognition capabilities.
- The costs of the projects are split 60:40 between the central and local governments.
- Delhi is getting ready to launch the Safe City Project, which aims to improve security for inhabitants, particularly women.

UNNECESSARY HYSTERECTOMIES

News Excerpt:

States and UTs were instructed by the Supreme Court to implement health guidelines formulated by the Centre to monitor "unnecessary" hysterectomies within three months.

Pre-Connect

- Hysterectomy is a surgical procedure to remove the uterus, and it was found, through a public interest litigation (PIL), that in the States of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan, "unnecessary hysterectomies" were carried out under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana as well as other government schemes related to healthcare.
- It was also noted with concern that several healthcare institutions were found to be misusing the procedure only to claim high insurance fees from governments under various health insurance schemes.

What is hysterectomy?

- It is a surgical procedure to remove the uterus and sometimes surrounding organs and tissues.
- When only the uterus is removed, it is called a partial hysterectomy. When the uterus and cervix are removed, it is called a total hysterectomy.
- When the uterus, cervix, part of the vagina, and a wide area of ligaments and tissues around these organs are removed, it is called a radical hysterectomy.
- These procedures may be done through the vagina (with no incisions in the abdomen) or through an incision (cut) in the abdomen.

W20 SUMMIT

News Excerpt:

Recently, the **Women 20 Summit** was held in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, with the **theme of 'Women-Led Development- Transform, Thrive and Transcend'**.

About Summit

- The summit will consist of an exhibition, a Janbhagidari event, 8 sessions and a closed-door meeting.
- Three sessions on the themes 'Breaking the Glass Ceiling', 'Economic Empowerment through Trade and Investment', and 'Investing in Services and Infrastructure for an Enabling Care Economy' took place on June 16.
- The W20 summit ended with a closing session on 'Celebrating the Power of Women Empowerment', that aims to celebrate the power of women empowerment and acknowledge the contribution of women to overall societal and economic progress in the world.

About W20:

- The Women 20 (W20) is the official G20 engagement group, created in 2015 under Turkey's Presidency of G20 to focus on gender equity.
- The primary objective of W20 is women's empowerment and advocating for women's rights, raising women's voices in society.
- India's W20 agenda focuses on five key priorities: Women's Entrepreneurship, Grassroots Women's Leadership, Bridging the Gender Digital Divide, Education and Skill Development, and Climate Change.

'LADLI BAHNA' SCHEME

News Excerpt:

The Madhya Pradesh government launched a scheme to make women financially independent.

About:

Recent Report on Participation in India's Workforce:

- According to the **Periodic Labour Force Survey, or PLFS (2022-23)**, there is a rise in female participation in India's workforce.
 - There is a rise in the percentage of the **population of all ages** – to 27.8%, up 3 percentage points **Year-on-Year (YoY)**, especially from the rural areas (up 3.3% to 30.5%).
 - The surge in employment (WPR) has been driven by **self-employed persons**, predominantly in rural areas.
- **Female participation:** The rise in the female LFPR is a major contributor to the overall rise in the worker-to-population ratio (WPR) employment and availability of rural and female labour in 2022-23.
 - This signifies a significant funnelling of economic progress to household livelihoods.
- **Male participation:** However, for males, the LFPR declined (-1.1% at 56.2%) more than WPR (-0.4%, to 54.4%).
 - This implies that notwithstanding a greater contribution by women, the unemployment rate (UR) decline for males has been larger than for females.
- **Occupation status** data shows a rise in female workers in agriculture sectors in FY23, both rural (+0.3pp YoY to 76.2%) and urban areas (+0.6pp to 11.7%).
 - **Rural India:** In rural areas, the proportion of women in industry and services has risen even as the Agri sector remains dominant.
 - Additionally, there has been a rise in the proportion of rural females of self-employed status (+3.2pp at 71%), indicating increasing dependence of rising LFPR and WPR on the Agri sector.
- **Urban India:** In contrast, their proportion in urban industry, construction and services has declined.

- Each woman will be given 1,000 rupees per month in the bank accounts with about 1.25 crore women as potential beneficiaries.
- The State government has also issued a phone number, 181, for the help of women.

- Ladli Bahna Army will also be formed for women empowerment and security. This Army will help in providing security to women and take benefits of government schemes.
- The goals include:
 - Enhancing women's economic independence.
 - Improving their health and nutrition status.
 - Expanding their influence over family decisions.

FEMALE SUICIDES IN INDIA

News Excerpt:

September 10 marked the observance of **World Suicide Prevention Day**, where it was observed that of female suicides, housewives had a 50% share.

Female Suicides in India:

- While more men (1,18,979) than women died by suicide in India, a deviation from the pattern was observed in those aged below 18, where the incidence of suicide was higher in females.
- According to **NCRB data**, as many as 45,026 women died by suicide in India in 2021, nearly 1 every 9 minutes.
 - Over **half of them, 23,178 females, were housewives**. On average, 63 housewives died by suicide every day in India in 2021.
- **Indian women make up 36% of all global suicides** in the 15 to 39 years age group – the highest share of any nation in the world.

RISING FEMALE WORK PARTICIPATION

News Excerpt:

With changes in the work status of females, predominated by the rise in Agri sectors, the rising contribution of females in the labour market epitomizes a stressed livelihood.

Key takeaways from the PLFS data:

- **Disguised unemployment:** The wages for the self-employed segment, male and female, are majorly driven by the rural areas (80% weight).
 - Rural self-employment accounts for the disguised unemployment clustered under
 - Helper in the household enterprise,
 - Own account worker and
 - A significant portion of wages is based on their activities; they do not represent actual cash wages.

- **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)** launched the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** in **April 2017**.
- The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** was **designed with two major objectives** for measuring employment and unemployment.
 - **The +** was for both rural and urban areas to measure the labour force estimates on key parameters in both usual status and CWS.
- **Decline in urban wages:** With respect to self-employed women, the weight of wages from rural (lower paying vs urban) has seen a remarkable rise from 72% in September 2018 to 84% in June 2023; the contribution of higher paying urban wages has declined.
 - As a result, the 4-year CAGR for self-employed females was a meagre 3.5% (INR 5636/month).
 - After COVID-19, real female wages (net of inflation) fell by 5.4%.
- **The narrow gap in the Male-female regular wages:** The regular salary/wage growth for rural females (7.8% 4-year CAGR, 1.8% in real terms) was higher than for males (5.7% CAGR), reflecting the narrowing female-male gap in regular wages.
 - However, the proportion of regular wage earners among females has declined in rural areas (8%, -0.1pp) and risen in urban areas (50.8%, +0.5pp).
- **Increased workload and responsibilities for women:** Declines in real income per worker amid the rise in dependency have led to a forced increase in women's participation in the workforce despite lower earnings.

FEMICIDES AT A TWENTY-YEAR PEAK ACROSS THE GLOBE

News Excerpt:

About **88,900 women and girls were intentionally killed worldwide** on the grounds of gender-related factors in 2022, a recent study from the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** and **UN Women** shows.

Key Highlights of the Study:

- According to the **UN research "Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide / femicide)"**, there was an **increase in femicide in 2022** despite a **global decline in homicides overall**.

- **In 2022, men made up 80% of all homicide victims, while women made up 20%.**
- **Women are more likely to be murdered by their partners** or someone known to them. This stems from the reality that women are primarily the victims of physical abuse at the hands of their close relatives.
 - **Out of the 88,900 female victims of homicides** in 2022, **55% were killed by family members** or intimate partners.
 - **In over half the female homicides in Europe, the perpetrators are partners** or related to the victims.
 - In the **Americas**, too, the disparity showed (45% among women homicides and 12% among men homicides).
 - In 2022, there were **about 20,000 female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide in Africa**, the highest among continents.
 - The **African continent exceeded Asia in femicides** for the first time in 13 years.
 - **In Asia, 18,400 women were killed by their families** during the same period.
 - Data also suggests that there was a general trend of reduction in gender-related killings of women before 2021, though it increased drastically in 2021 and 2022, especially in Africa.

CHILDREN

PRE-CONCEPTION AND PRE-NATAL DIAGNOSTIC TECHNIQUES (PCPNDT) ACT

News Excerpt:

Recently, certain aspects of the PC & PNDT Act have been recommended for better implementation by Delhi High Court.

About PC & PNDT Act, 1994

- This Act was enacted to ban female foeticide and deal with the declining sex ratio.
- It banned prenatal sex determination, and the motive behind this was to ban the sex selection techniques during the conception period and also to stop the misuse of prenatal diagnostic techniques for abortion, especially gender-biased abortions.

Other Government Initiatives

- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**
 - The initiative focuses on the declining child sex ratio and empowering girls through awareness.
- **National Plan of Action for Children**
 - It aims to eliminate gender-biased sex selection for children's rights and well-being.
- The Act controls the use of prenatal diagnostic techniques (E.g., ultrasound machine) by limiting their access to only detecting **genetic abnormalities, metabolic disorders, chromosomal abnormalities, certain congenital malformations, haemoglobinopathies and sex-linked disorders.**

Amendment Associated with the PNDT Act, 1994

- To improve the regulation of the technology used in sex selection, the Act was amended in 2003 to The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT Act) with the objective of **bringing the technique of pre-conception sex selection and ultrasound technique within the ambit** of the Act.
- Through the Maharashtra Regulation of Pre-natal diagnostic Techniques Act, Maharashtra was the first state to ban pre-natal sex determination in 1980.
- It mandates that no laboratory or clinic should conduct tests like ultrasonography for the sex determination of foetus.
- As per the law, it is illegal for anyone to communicate information regarding the gender of the child to the pregnant woman or relative.
- There is **imprisonment for upto three years and a fine of 10,000** if anyone is caught promoting sex determination facilities.
- **Offences** under the Act include:
 - Conducting or aiding in prenatal diagnostic techniques in unregistered facilities.
 - Sex selection on a man or woman.
 - Use of prenatal diagnostic techniques other than the one specified in the Act
 - Sales, distribution, supply, and renting of ultrasound machines or similar machines for sex determination.

ONE NATION ONE HELPLINE INITIATIVE

News Excerpt:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoW&CD) has taken a momentous step towards enhancing child helpline services.

About:

- This move aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of child helpline services by integrating them with other emergency services like the police, fire, and ambulance departments.
- Initially, this merger will be implemented in nine states and Union Territories, including Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Goa, Mizoram, Ladakh, Puducherry, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, with other regions to follow in a phased manner.
- The **Childline India Foundation (CIF)** and its partner NGOs were responsible for operating the 24x7 helpline under the Child Protection Services scheme.
- However, the existing system faced challenges in interoperability with other emergency services, resulting in delays during distress situations. Furthermore, ChildLine services were available in only 568 districts, leaving approximately 200 districts without coverage.
- In the past, distress emergency calls involving children/juveniles used to be dialled to the **helpline number 1098.**
- From there, calls would be forwarded to the CIF, an umbrella organization for more than 100 NGOs. These NGOs would take on cases involving children and then forward them to the police after they had a better understanding of the circumstances.
- To address these issues and improve the Childline 1098 service, the Ministry has appointed the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) in Kerala as the "total solution provider."**
- The goal is to automate and **integrate the Childline 1098 service with ERSS 112.** This integration will allow incoming 1098 calls to be classified into emergency, non-emergency, and information categories.

PROTOCOL FOR MANAGEMENT OF MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN AT ANGANWADI

News Excerpt:

The 'Protocol for Management of Malnutrition in Children', jointly prepared by the Ministry for Women and Child Development and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, was launched during the national event Suposhit Bharat-Sashakt Bharat.

National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21):

- As per NFHS-5 (2019-21), the nutrition indicators for children under 5 years have improved compared to NFHS-4 (2015-16).
- Stunting has reduced from 38.4 percent to 35.5 percent, Wasting from 21.0 percent to 19.3 percent, and Underweight prevalence from 35.8 percent to 32.1 percent.

What is Malnutrition?

- Malnutrition refers to **deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's energy and/or nutrient intake.**
- Malnutrition represents both **under and over-nutrition.**
- The term malnutrition covers 2 broad groups of conditions:
 - **Under-nutrition** includes:
 - Stunting (low height for age),
 - wasting (low weight for height),
 - underweight (low weight for age),
 - micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiencies (a lack of essential vitamins and minerals).
 - **Over-nutrition:** It includes overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer).

Proposed Framework:

- In India, the **highest burden of undernutrition occurs between birth and two years of age;** therefore, preventive measures must predominantly address **children under two years.**
- It is the first-ever national protocol under which severe acute malnourished (SAM) children without medical complications will be managed at Anganwadi centres instead of **nutrition rehabilitation centres (NRC).**
- The protocol lists that children with bilateral pitting oedema and failed appetite tests will be enrolled in the NRCs.

- This protocol includes the concept of "**Buddy mothers**" between mothers of a healthy child and of a malnourished child, enabling joint supervision and exchange of guidance between both with respect to the health of a malnourished child.
- It creates '**malnutrition-free gram panchayats**', highlighting that panchayats can be a helpful convergence platform for mothers groups to meet and discuss nutrition-related issues.

Proposed Protocol for Assessment and Management of Malnutrition in Children:

- **Step-1: Growth Monitoring:** Identification of malnourished children should be done using the Growth Monitoring Data (**Weight-for-height and Weight-for-age**).
- **Step-2: Appetite Test for SAM Children:** The Children who pass this test shall be considered beneficiaries under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme.
- **Step-3: Medical Assessment:** Infants less than 6 months of age who are visibly wasted or too weak should be immediately referred to the nearest health facility/NRC for evaluation and treatment by ASHA/ AWW/ ANM.
- **Step-4: Deciding the level of care based on physical condition (Weight-and-age).**
- **Step-5: Nutritional management:** All SAM children who fail appetite tests and/or have medical complications should be referred to NRC for further management.
- **Step-6: Medical management:** All the SAM children without medical complications and SUW children who need medical care as per the assessment done in step 3 shall be treated as prescribed by the Medical Officer.
- **Step-7: Nutrition, Health Education and counselling, including WASH practices.**
- **Step-8: Visit by AWW and referral.**
- **Step-9: Duration of Monitoring:** MAM Child needs to complete two months after achieving proper height and weight. SAM child needs to complete up to the age of 6 years.d
- **Step-10: Follow-up Care.**

Related Terms:

- **Bilateral pitting oedema** is swelling in both legs characterized by an indentation, or 'pit', that remains when pressure is applied to the swollen area.
- **NRC** is a unit in a health facility where children with SAM are admitted and managed.
- **SAM** is a condition in which a child has a very low weight relative to height, as per WHO growth standards.

Government initiatives to address Malnutrition:

- **Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Erstwhile Integrated Child Development Services-ICDS):** The Integrated Nutrition Support Programme seeks to address the challenges of Malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a strategic shift in nutrition content and delivery to respond to the challenge of providing pre-school non-formal education on the one hand and break the vicious cycle of Malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality on the other.
 - Beneficiaries- children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers and adolescent girls in the age group 14-18 years (Only in Aspiration Districts).
- **PM-POSHAN scheme (Mid-Day Meal Scheme):** It is implemented by the Ministry of Education to meet the nutritional standards specified in the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.

Under this, children of Bal Vatika (just before class I) and children studying in classes I-VIII or within the age group of 6-14 years are entitled to one mid-day meal free of charge every day except on school holidays, in all Government and Government aided schools.

INDIA FAILED TO REDUCE PREMATURE BIRTHS

News Excerpt:

According to the recent Lancet report, India has not improved in reducing preterm or premature births in the previous decade. India recorded 3.02 million preterm births in 2020- the highest worldwide- accounting for over 20 percent of all preterm births globally.

About:

- The research by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical

Medical, UK, showed that over 50 percent of all preterm births in 2020 occurred in just 8 countries:

- India is followed by Pakistan, Nigeria, China, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the US.
- In South Asia, Bangladesh had the highest rate of preterm births in 2020 (16.2 percent), followed by Pakistan (14.4 percent) and India (13.0 percent).

Definition:

Preterm births are babies **born before 37 weeks** of pregnancy compared to the normal term of 40 weeks. Based on gestational age, there are sub-categories of preterm birth –

- **Extremely preterm** (less than 28 weeks)
- **Very preterm** (between 28 and 32 weeks)
- **Moderate to late preterm** (between 32 and 37 weeks).

MEITY DIRECTED SOCIAL MEDIA INTERMEDIARIES TO REMOVE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL (CSAM)

News Excerpt:

- Intermediaries, **including YouTube, X, and Telegram**, were also directed to implement content moderation algorithms and reporting mechanisms to prevent the dissemination of CSAM.
 - Compliance delays will result in the withdrawal of the safe harbour protection (immunity against third-party content) under **Section 79 of the IT Act**.
 - Noncompliance will be deemed a breach of **Rule 3(1)(b) and Rule 4(4) of the IT Rules, 2021**.

About CSAM:

- CSAM (like child pornography) are part of **online child sexual abuse and exploitation (OCSAE)** that also incorporates activities such as luring children into sexual chats, grooming, etc.
- About **4.5 lakh cases** of spread of CSAM have been **reported in 2023** in India.
- **Key Legal framework:** IT Act (2000), Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (2012), National Cyber Security Policy (2013), etc.

The Section 79 of the IT Act:

Section 79 in the **Information Technology Act of 2000** says that any social media intermediary will not be on the radar of legal action for any third-party information, data, or communication link made available or hosted by him. It further reveals that the available protection shall be applicable if the said intermediary does not, in any way, initiate the transmission of the message in question, select the receiver of the transmitted message, and not modify any information contained in the transmission.

IT Rules, 2021:

- **Rule 3(1)(b):** Mandates all intermediaries to ensure that their platform does not contain obscene "harmful to child" content.
- **Rule 4(4):** Mandates bigger Intermediaries (more than 50 lakh users in India) to proactively identify and take down CSAM using technology-based solutions.

ADOLESCENT LEADERSHIP BEYOND SCHOOLS: UNCRC

News Excerpt:

In a changing world, adolescent leaders like Greta Thunberg, Thandiwe Abdullah, Bana Alabed, Malala Yousafzai and others have successfully expressed their voices on contemporary world issues.

- This changing scenario demands expanding children's participation in the civic and political arena.

About UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child):

- The UNCRC is a **legally binding international agreement** adopted in 1989, setting out every child's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. Every member of the United Nations has ratified this, except the US.
- UNCRC comprises **four pillars** - the right to **survival, protection, development and participation**.
- The convention has **54 articles** that cover all aspects of a child's life.
 - **Article 12** focuses on child participation:
 - **Right to Express:** State Parties shall assure the child who can form her or his own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child

- **Opportunity in Judicial and administrative proceedings:** The child shall, in particular, be provided the chance to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Child rights and Indian policy framework on lines with UNCRC:

- India ratified UNCRC in 1992, which states that all children are born with **fundamental rights**.
 - Life, **survival** and development,
 - **Protection** from violence, abuse or neglect,
 - An **education** that enables children to fulfil their potential,
 - Be raised by, or have a **relationship with, their parents**,
 - **express** their **opinions** and be listened to.
- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is a statutory body under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005, under the administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.
- **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (Amendment to Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929):** It prohibits solemnization of marriage where either the groom or the bride is below the marriageable age (18 years in the case of girls and 21 years for boys).
- **Child Labour Prohibition & Regulation Amendment Act, 2016:** It prohibits the engagement of children in all occupations and the engagement of adolescents in hazardous occupations and processes and the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (Amended in 1986):** This Act, with respect to children, deals with person(s) who procure or attempt to procure any child for prostitution or person(s) who are found with a child in a brothel (it is presumed child has been detained for prostitution) and punishes them. It also provides for the due care of rescued children and aims to prevent 'immoral traffic' in women and girls.
- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012:** It aims at punishing the offenders who are guilty of offences of sexual assault, sexual

harassment and pornography against children below the age of 18 years of age.

- It provides for establishing Special Courts and also lays down procedures for the trial, like the name of the child victim not being disclosed, case proceedings to be conducted in court with cameras recording the trial, etc.

MANDATORY REPORTING UNDER POCSO

News Excerpt:

The **Himachal Pradesh High Court** recently ruled that the failure to report sexual crimes against children below 18 years is a bailable offence.

About POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act:

- It was enacted by the Parliament in **2012 under the Ministry of Women and Child Development** to create a safer environment for children aged less than 18 years from offences like sexual harassment, sexual assault, and child pornography.
 - The Government also notified the **POCSO Rules, 2020**, which enabled the implementation of amendments to the Act.
- It also mandates the **setting up of Special Courts** that are better equipped to deal with such offences more effectively.
- The **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** and the **State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR)** have been constituted under the **Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005**.

Salient Features:

- **Gender-neutral law:**
 - By defining a child as ‘**any person**’ below the **age of 18 years**, the POCSO Act sets a gender-neutral tone for the legal framework available to child sexual abuse victims.
 - Consequently, a child of any gender who has been sexually wronged has access to the remedies provided under the Act.
- **Not reporting abuse is an offence:**
 - The **mandatory reporting obligation is imposed under Section 19**.
 - It requires every person who suspects or has knowledge of a sexual offence being committed against a child to **report it to the local police or the Special Juvenile Police Unit**.

- Any person in charge of a company or an institution who **fails to report** to the NCPCR a sexual offence relating to a subordinate under their control is **liable to be punished with imprisonment and a fine under Section 21 of the Act**.
- The Act, however, exempts children from any non-reporting liabilities. Over the years, criminal actions have been initiated against several individuals, particularly those in charge of educational institutions, for hushing up child sexual abuse offences.
- **No time limit for reporting abuse:**
 - The trauma that child sexual abuse victims endure prevents them from voicing their complaints immediately.
 - In 2018, the Union Ministry of Law and Justice clarified that there is **no time or age bar for reporting sexual offences under the POCSO Act**.
- **Maintaining confidentiality of the victim’s identity:**
 - **Section 23 of the POCSO Act prohibits disclosing the victim’s identity** in any form of media except when permitted by the special courts established under the Act.
 - A violation of this section can attract punishments under the Act, regardless of whether such disclosures are made in good faith.
 - Reiterating this position, the Supreme Court issued a host of directions in 2018 forbidding, among other things, revealing a POCSO victim’s identity on social media.
- **New obligations under the POCSO Rules:**
 - In 2022, the Government introduced a fresh set of POCSO Rules, which includes three chief takeaways for any organization dealing with children in India.
 - Any institution housing children or coming in regular contact with them must conduct a **periodic police verification and background check** of every employee who might interact with a child.
 - Such an institution must impart **regular training to sensitize its employees** on child safety and protection.
 - It has to adopt a child protection policy based on the principle of **zero tolerance for violence against children**.

- The **NCPCR** and **SCPCRs** have been given the authority to monitor the implementation of the Act's provisions.

OTHER VULNERABLE SECTIONS

LABOUR 20

About

Recently, A two-day first Labour 20 (L20) meeting was held at Amritsar in Punjab.

Labour 20

- L20 is one of the engagement groups under G20.
- The Labour 20 (L20) is one of the 6 outreach groups within the G20 and represents the interests of workers at the G20 level.
- It is convened by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC).
- It comprises leaders and representatives of trade union centres of G20 countries who provide analyses and policy recommendations aimed at addressing labour-related issues.
- Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, India's largest labour organisation, is hosting the L20 inception meeting under the India G20 presidency along with other leading trade unions of the country.

G20

- The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier forum for international economic cooperation.
- It plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues.
- The G20 was founded in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis as a forum for Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to discuss global economic and financial issues.
- Trade union delegates, experts, and labour leaders from 20 countries, as well as trade union leaders and labour experts from India, are participating in the event.
- The Inception meeting of L20 India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 is a watershed moment to collaborate with the world on critical global issues.

PALLIATIVE CARE

News Excerpt:

Recently, the government issued a new set of operational guidelines that limit the focus of palliative care in India to people with cancer.

About palliative care

- India has around **20% of the world's population** and is more severely affected by non-communicable diseases than any other country, with cancer being the most common, accounting for **1.4 million annual deaths**. As lifestyle-related illnesses like diabetes and respiratory ailments get worse, palliative care becomes important.
- A crucial component of healthcare is Palliative care, which tries to **improve the quality of life and lessen suffering for people with terminal illnesses**.
- The social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of those who are nearing the end of their life are considered part of a holistic approach to patient care.
- By considering the entire person and not just the illness, **it seeks to improve the patients' and their families' overall wellbeing**.
- Palliative care also **includes grieving support for carers** when the patient passes away.

DEMAND TO RESTORE OLD PENSION SCHEME (OPS)

News Excerpt:

The demand for the old pension scheme (OPS) is growing especially after a few States announced that they would be reverting to it.

About the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).

- Under the OPS, public servants are given a monthly pension. Based on the employee's most recent basic wage and the number of years of service.
- **It guarantees a pension** for those with at least ten years of government service.
- The OPS **scheme offered defined benefits** to all government employees without any contribution on their part.
- Government employees who retire under the OPS are paid their whole pension by the Government.
- **The National Pension Scheme (NPS)** was launched in 2004.

- The **primary bone of contention** is that the NPS does not guarantee a certain amount.
- Also, unlike OPS, **the NPS requires employees** to contribute a sum throughout their working years.
- Almost two decades after the NPS came into effect, several States are switching back to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).

COMPARISON OF OLD AND NEW PENSION SCHEME		
DETAIL	OPS	NPS
Contribution of employee	Nil	Employee contribution required
Pension Guarantee	Yes, by Government	No
Amount of pension	50% of the last pay	Share market and PFMs driven
On price rise	Dearness Relief given	Nil
PE eligibility	Yes	No
PF withdrawal	Temporary withdrawal: within 15 year PF final: After 15 year	Tier 1-NIL Tier-2 withdrawable

OPERATION STORM MAKERS II

News Excerpt:

According to Interpol, the Telangana Police, under **Operation Storm Makers II**, registered one of the first cases in India of **human trafficking victims forced to commit cybercrimes**.

About Operation Storm Makers II:

- It is the **first operation** carried out by **Interpol** from October 16 to October 20, targeting a Human trafficking group that forces victims to commit cybercrimes or scams on an industrial scale.
- It involves Law enforcement agencies in 27 countries across Asia and other regions.
- **The operation resulted in the arrest of 281 individuals for offences** such as human trafficking, passport forgery, corruption, telecommunications fraud, and sexual exploitation.
- **Several citizens were taken to Dubai** on the pretext of a job, only to be shipped to Thailand and then Myanmar. Once there, they were handed over to an online fraud syndicate and kept under armed guard while being trained to defraud banks.
- **In India**, an accountant was lured to Southeast Asia, where he was forced to participate in online fraud

schemes and could only leave after a ransom was paid.

SPARK PROJECT

News Excerpt:

In collaboration with the Women's Development Corporation in Maharashtra, the ILO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are implementing the SPARK project.

About SPARK (Sparking Disability Inclusive Rural Transformation) Project:

- ILO is implementing the multi-country **SPARK project on disability inclusion in rural livelihood**.
- The SPARK project is **integrated into the IFAD-funded Nav Tejaswini Yojana**, Government of Maharashtra.
- The project has brought an attitudinal shift towards persons with disabilities from the societal to administrative levels.
- **Working:**
 - Persons with disabilities were put in the lead, being identified from the villages, and trained as **Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs)**.
 - The DIFs engage with the community, persons with disabilities, caregivers of persons with disabilities, women from self-help groups and other stakeholders to raise awareness about disability inclusion and barriers to inclusion.
 - The DIFs identify women with disabilities and **mainstream them in existing self-help groups** for social and economic development, where these women can access funds to start an enterprise.

NATIONAL POPULATION REGISTER AND CENSUS

News Excerpt:

If citizens want to exercise the right to fill out the Census form on their own rather than through government enumerators, they will have to first update their National Population Register (NPR) details online.

Pre-Connect

- Census 2021, which has been postponed indefinitely, will be the first digital Census allowing citizens to **"self-enumerate"** as and when it is conducted.
- The Census is conducted in two phases.

- The first phase- the House Listing Operations (HLO) and Housing Census — is to be conducted with simultaneous updating of NPR.
- Population enumeration is the second and the main phase, which collects details on key social and economic parameters.
- According to a collection of reports released by the Home Minister, "self-enumeration for Census will be provided to only those households that have updated the NPR online".
- "During self-enumeration in NPR, Aadhaar / mobile number is mandatorily collected," the Report contains the details of census exercises.
- According to the **Citizenship Rules 2003**, the NPR is the first step towards the compilation of the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRI/NRC).
- The yet-to-be-launched mobile-friendly portal will allow users to register their mobile number in the NPR database, self-enumerate and fill in the details under House listing Operations.

About Census

- A population Census is the process of collecting, compiling, analyzing, and disseminating demographic, social, cultural, and economic data relating to all persons in the country at a particular time (ten-year intervals in India for population census).
- The first complete Census of an Indian city was conducted in Dacca in 1830 by Henry Walter.
- In 1849, the Government of India ordered the Local Government to conduct quinquennial population returns.
- The Census of 1881, undertaken by W.C. Plowden, the Census Commissioner of India, was a great step towards a modern synchronous census. Since then, censuses have been conducted uninterruptedly once every ten years.
- The Census of 1881 covered the entire continent of British India (except Kashmir), including feudatory states in political connection with the Government of India. However, it did not include French and Portuguese colonial possessions.
- The first Census of Independent India had 14 questions, while the last one had 29 questions. The Government has proposed 31 questions for the current Census.
- The responsibility of conducting the decadal Census rests with the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, Ministry of Home Affairs**, Government of India.

27TH WORLD ROAD CONGRESS

News excerpt:

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways addresses the Ministerial Session at the 27th World Road Congress in Prague, Czech Republic, **focusing on Road Safety**.

Stockholm Declaration: It was signed in the "3rd High-Level Global Conference on Road Safety for Achieving Global Goals 2030" in **2020**.

Objective- To bring road safety on the global Agenda and renew the world community's commitment to safer roads.

Aim- Halving the number of road fatalities and severe injuries by 2030.

SDG Target 3.6- Halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.

Brasilia Declaration: India signed this at the 2nd High-Level Global Conference on Traffic Safety **2015**. It recommended strengthening existing legislation, adopting sustainable transport and strengthening the post-crash response.

About the news:

- **THEME:** "Together on the Road Again".
- In India, about 80,000 people are killed in road crashes yearly, **i.e., 13 percent of the total fatality worldwide**.
- According to a World Bank study, road accidents in India each year kill about 150,000 people and injure another 450,000.
- India has taken various steps in automobile safety with flagship programs such as **BHARAT NCAP**. These programs are focused on spreading awareness **to effect behavioural change** and ensuring **flawless rule enforcement**.

Outcome: During the 27th World Road Congress, the Union Minister reiterated the commitment to achieving the global road safety targets set in the Stockholm Declaration.

GLOBAL COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

News Excerpt:

ILO's governing body discussed the Global Coalition for Social Justice in the 349th session of the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**.

About the Agenda of the 349th session:

- It took place from **30th October to 9th November 2023** in **Geneva**.

- The **Agenda** of this session, Governing Body of ILO, includes **discussions on the Global Coalition for Social Justice and developments at the United Nations**.
- The Agenda includes the strategy for the **right to collective bargaining**, the **Youth Employment Action Plan**, and the **Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health 2024–30**.

About the Global Coalition for Social Justice:

- It aims to generate increased political commitments and investments and **foster concrete actions for social justice and decent work** supporting national priorities.
- The Coalition will increase multilateral cooperation and partnerships and play a key role in galvanizing support for the recognition of social justice in the multilateral Agenda, particularly at the **UN Summit of the Future in 2024 and the proposed World Social Summit in 2025**.

About ILO:

- It was created in **1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles** that ended World War I.
- **The Governing Body of ILO is its executive body.** (Office is the secretariat of the Organization).
 - It meets **three times a year, in March, June and November**.
 - It makes decisions on **ILO policy** and elects the Director-General.
 - It decides the Agenda of the International Labour Conference.

India and Governing Body:

- Since 1922, India, a **founding member** of the ILO, has held a **non-elective** permanent member **seat on the Governing Body** as one of the 10 countries of chief industrial importance.
 - India was a member of **all six committees of the Governing Body**.
 - The first ILO Office in **India started in 1928**.
- Indian employers and workers' representatives **have occasionally been elected as Members of the Governing Body**.
- **So far, four Indians** have been elected as Chairman of the Governing Body.

EDUCATION

NATIONAL CREDIT FRAMEWORK (NCrF)

News Excerpt:

The implementation of the National Credit Framework (NCrF) has been announced by the University Grants Commission for all regulatory organizations and universities in India.

About National Credit Framework (NCrF):

- NCrF has been jointly developed by UGC, AICTE, NCVET, NIOS, CBSE, NCERT, Ministry of Education, DGT, and Ministry of Skill Development to achieve this vision and intent of NEP.
- The framework **defines the academic year by the number of hours a student puts in** and accordingly provides the credits at the end of the academic year.
 - It is a meta-framework with three verticals:
 - **National School Education Qualification Framework (NSEQF)**
 - **National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF)**
 - **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF):**
 - The framework has put **1200 hours** as the total '**Notional Learning hours in a year**'.
 - A minimum **credit of 40** can be earned for 1200 hours of learning every year with 20 credits per semester of six months.
 - Students will earn **a total of 160 credits during their entire schooling**, by the last year of graduation course the student will have 120 credits and if he completes a PhD, the earned credits would be 320.
 - Credits will be given for participating in Olympiads, science quizzes, internships, and taking up jobs while they are studying in college.
 - Along with credits, there are credit levels, the framework proposes several **levels from 1 to 8**.
 - Students' registration will be based on Aadhar, and then an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) account will be opened (specific for higher education) for the deposit of degrees and credits to enable the transfer of credits across higher educational institutes.

- A **knowledge locker** will be introduced along the lines of DigiLocker for the deposit of degrees and credentials.

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING

News Excerpt:

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Mumbai has achieved its highest rank ever, breaking into the world's top 150 universities in the latest QS World University Ranking edition.

About the QS World Universities Ranking:

- This marks the **first time in eight years that an Indian higher education institution has made it to the top 150 list.**
- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore previously achieved this feat in 2016, when it ranked 147th.
- The UK-based ranking agency, QS Quacquarelli Symonds, has partly attributed the fluctuation to a revision of the assessment parameters this year.
- It introduced three new indicators — sustainability, employment outcomes, and international research network, each carrying a weightage of 5 per cent.
- From 2018 to 2022, IIT Bombay produced 15,905 academic papers, generating 143,800 citations.
- India is the seventh most represented country globally and the third in Asia, trailing only Japan (52 universities) and China (71 universities).
- India has two more entries in the world's top 500 universities, with the University of Delhi (ranked 407th) and Anna University (ranked 427th) making their debut in this tier.
- Four new Indian universities: **'University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), Chitkara University, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, and the Indian Statistical Institute'** have been ranked this year.

NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

News Excerpt:

The **National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill** was passed by the Parliament.

About NRF

- The establishment of the National Research Foundation was one of the key recommendations made by the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.**

- The foundation is intended to play a crucial role as a **coordinating agency, bringing industry to the forefront of research** by bridging the gap between researchers, governmental bodies, and companies.
- The goal of this strategy is to **encourage the expansion of research initiatives** and improve the nation's overall research environment.

Aim and Objective of NRF:

- It seeks to **advance scientific investigation** at Indian institutions of higher learning.
- Along with more fundamental objectives like **funding and mentoring research**, it also aims to **broaden the range of college and university research engagement.**
- By providing chances for **doctorate and post-doctoral fellowships**, the NRF hopes to close the gap between research and higher education and encourage active researchers to work with current faculty members.

How will it be funded?

- The National Research Foundation (NRF) would operate on a **₹50,000-crore budget for five years.**
- Government funding will account for **28%** of the total (₹14,000 crore), with the balance **72%** (₹36,000 crore) coming from the private sector.
- The plan calls for raising the Government's contribution to **₹20,000 crores annually**, with **₹4,000 crores coming from the budget** of the current Science and Engineering Research Board. As a result, the NRF will receive an **additional ₹10,000 crore over the following five years.**
- However, this rise in research and development expenditures is thought to be modest, as it represents **less than 2% of India's gross domestic expenditure on research and development (GERD).**
- **India's GERD is much lower than that of other developed nations**, such as the United States and China.
- India had a GERD of **₹1,13,825 crore in 2017-18**, while its GDP was **7.6 and 5.1** times lower than that of the United States and China, respectively.
- Additionally, during the same time period, **India's GERD was about 24 times lower than that of both of these nations**, and the disparity has become even wider in the last five years.

STUDY IN INDIA (SII) PORTAL

News Excerpt:

The Study in India (SII) Portal was launched. It's a one-stop platform with comprehensive information about the Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with provision to apply in the institute/course of their choice.

About

- **Study in India programme:** The Ministry of Education (MOE) launched this in 2018 to attract foreign students to Indian higher educational institutions (HEIs).
- **Objectives:** To improve the soft power of India. **To double India's market share of global education exports from less than 1 percent to 2 percent.** Improvement in overall quality of higher education and increase the global ranking. To reduce the export-import imbalance in the number of international students.
- Tuition fee waivers to meritorious foreign students: 100% waiver only for the top 25% students, 50% waiver only for the next 25% students 25% waiver only for the next 25% students. Expenditure on the fee waiver will have to be borne by the Institute concerned, based on cross-subsidization or through its existing funding. No additional cash flow from the Government for this.
- The Study in India programme involves partnership with educational institutes to enrol international students based on one of the following **criteria**:
 - National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranking (≤ 100)
 - National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accreditation score (≥ 3.01)
 - Institutes of National Importance (INI)

INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION MUST BE GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE

News Excerpt:

Recently, the D/o Higher Education Ministry of Education **set up an Overarching Committee to strengthen the assessment and accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).**

About HEIs:

Higher education **is tertiary education, leading to the award of an academic degree.** It comprises a post-secondary, third-level, or tertiary education component and is **an optional final stage of formal learning after completing secondary education.**

What is Accreditation in HIEs?

Higher education accreditation is a **type of quality assurance process under which services and operations of post-secondary educational institutions or programs are evaluated to determine if applicable standards are met.** If standards are met, accredited status is granted by the agency.

About the Overarching Committee:

- This overarching committee was **set up on November 3, 2022, by the Ministry of Education.**
- **K Radhakrishnan, chairman of IIT's Kanpur Board of Governors**
- , chaired the committee.
- The report's title is '**Transformative Reforms for Strengthening Periodic Assessment and Accreditation for All Higher Education in India**'.
- **Aim/Objectives of the Committee:**
 - **To strengthen the accreditation processes** by NAAC and the ranking system by NIRF,
 - **To recommend** how more institutions come into the fold of accreditation and
 - **To prepare a roadmap** for aligning NAAC, NBA, and NIRF to the proposed National Accreditation Council (NAC) in HECI.

HEALTH

FATTY LIVER DISEASE

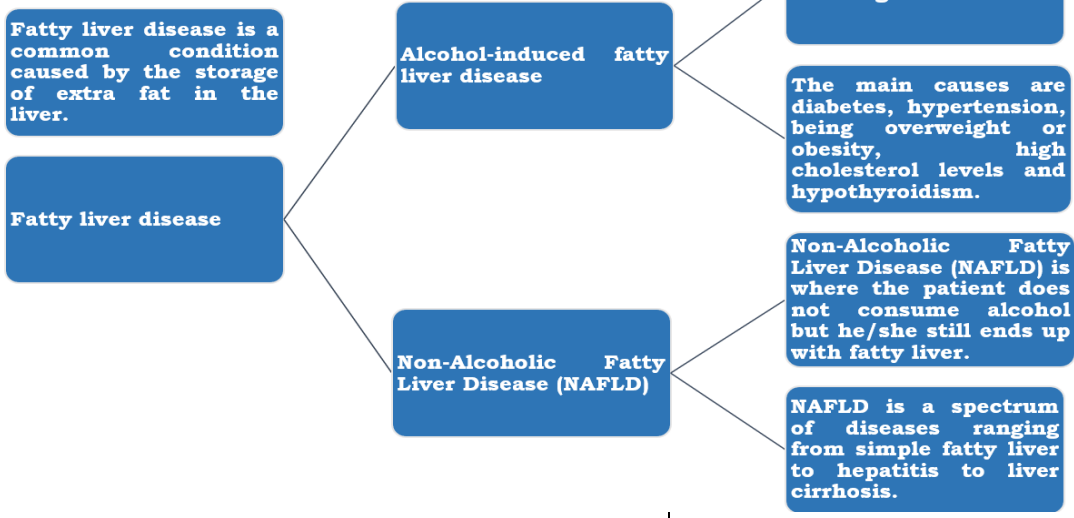
News Excerpt:

According to recent research, with every one-hour decrease in sleep time from the recommended seven-eight hours, the risk of fat deposition in the liver increased by 24%.

Key points of research:

- When 10,000 persons with sleep disorders were followed up for one year, incident fatty liver disease was noted in 14, while in those without sleep disorders, it was only six.
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease association was significantly higher among persons with shorter sleep duration (less than six hours per night) and excessive daytime sleepiness.
- Inadequate sleep duration was strongly associated with an elevated risk of developing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, and adequate sleep helped prevent it.

- Compared with non-nappers, long daytime nappers (more than 60 minutes) had a higher risk of developing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.



- It aims to strengthen infrastructure, human resource development, early diagnosis, and promoting health and management.

- For proper management NCD cells are established at National, State and District levels while NCD Clinics are set up at district and community Health Centres levels.
- Currently, under NPCDCS, there are 677 NCDs, 187 Districts Cardiac Care Units, 266 District Day Care Centres and 5392 NCD Community Health Centre-level clinics.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR PREVENTION & CONTROL OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NP-NCD)

News Excerpt:

The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) programme was recently renamed into the National Programme for Prevention & Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD).

Non-Communicable Diseases

- Non-Communicable Diseases or chronic diseases are a combination of **genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioural factors** and are generally of long duration.
- Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes are the main types of non-communicable diseases.
- The main risk factors contributing to non-communicable diseases are **tobacco use, unhealthy diet, harmful use of alcohol, physical inactivity and air pollution.**

About NPCDCS/NP-NCD:

- This programme was implemented under the National Health Mission in India and was launched in 2010.

Status of Non- Non-Communicable Diseases:

Globally:

- As per WHO, NCDs are responsible for 71% of all deaths.
- 85% of nearly 15 million people who die from NCDs are between the ages of 30 and 69. Also, these "premature" deaths are mainly in low and middle-income countries.
- Cardiovascular diseases account for most NCD deaths, or 17.9 million people annually, followed by cancers (9.3 million), respiratory diseases (4.1 million), and diabetes (1.5 million). These four groups of diseases account for over 80% of all premature NCD deaths.
- Suicide occurs throughout the lifespan and was the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29 year olds globally in 2019. It is common in all regions of the world.

In India:

As per the Report by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR):

- Deaths due to NCDs increased from 37.9% in 1990 to 61.8% in 2016.
- There are 55% of the total disability-adjusted life years in India.
- In comparison to less developed states, NCDs are more burdensome in developed states.

Government Initiatives to Combat NCD:

- **Supporting State Cancer Institutes:** The Central Government is working on **strengthening the tertiary care cancer facilities scheme** to set up State Cancer Institutes and Tertiary Care Centres.
- To make available Cancer and Cardiovascular Diseases drugs and implants at discounted prices to patients under **Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT)**, various outlets named Deendayal outlets have been opened in many institutions.
- **Department of Pharmaceuticals is setting up Jan Aushadhi Stores** to provide generic medicines at affordable prices.
- **Under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana**, new AIIMS and many modern institutes have been established and are being established that focus on various aspects of oncology.
- **Fit India Movement** is another initiative by the Government for a healthy lifestyle.

FOOD SAFETY IN INDIA

News Excerpt

The Advertisement Monitoring Committee at the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) flagged 32 fresh cases of food business operators (FBOs) making misleading claims and advertisements.

About the Food Advertising in India:

- Food advertising has been considered as a "fairly violative sector" by the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI).
- ASCI also informs that most complaints of misleading Ads were associated with the nutrition of a product, its benefits and the ingredient mix.
- The advertisements and claims should be adhered to the truth, be unambiguous, meaningful, and not misleading and should be helpful for consumers for information comprehension.
- Claims should be substantiated with the validated methods of quantifying the ingredient.

FSSAI

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- It is an autonomous statutory body under **the Ministry of Health**

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- The CCPA has been established under **section 10 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019** for regulating matters relating to violation of the rights of the consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the interests of public and consumers and to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.
- It has notified **'Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022'** with an objective to curb misleading advertisements and protect the consumers, who may be exploited or affected by such advertisements.
- The CCPA can penalize manufacturers, advertisers, and endorsers for misleading advertisements with a maximum of 10 lakh rupees. For subsequent contraventions, the CCPA may impose a penalty of up to 50 lakh rupees.
- The Authority can prohibit the endorser of a misleading advertisement from making any endorsement for upto 1 year and for subsequent contravention, prohibition can extend upto 3 years.

Important terms used in the Food Advertising Ecosystem in India:

- **Natural**
 - When a food is a single food derived from a recognised natural source with no other ingredient added to it.
 - Composite Foods are considered natural ingredients made food but not as natural food.
- **Fresh**
 - These are food products that are not processed in any manner other than washing, peeling, chilling, trimming, cutting or irradiation by ionising radiation.
 - The reference to "Fresh" is forbidden if the processing endeavours to extend the shelf life of the product.
- **The original** describes the formulation of food products with a traceable origin, which has remained unchanged over time.
- **Pure** is used for single-ingredient foods where nothing has been added and are devoid of all avoidable contamination.
- **Nutritional claims** are either about comparing with other products or specific content of a product.

- The overall burden of disease is assessed using the **disability-adjusted life year (DALY)**, a time-based measure that combines **years of life lost due to premature mortality (YLLs)** and years of life lost due to time lived in states of less than full health, or **years of healthy life lost due to disability (YLDs)**.
- One DALY represents the loss of the equivalent of one year of full health.
- Using DALYs, the burden of diseases that cause premature death but little disability (such as drowning or measles) can be compared to that of diseases that do not cause death but do cause disability (such as cataract causing blindness).

- **Claims of equivalence** can be defined through examples such as "contains the same of (nutrient) as a food" or as much (nutrient) as a (food).

Regulations Related to Misleading Ads and Claims in India:

- **The Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006:** It consolidates the laws relating to food and establishes the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to lay down science-based standards for articles of food and regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import, to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **The Food Safety and Standards (Advertisements & Claims) Regulations 2018** makes companies accountable for their claims on food products and catering interests of customers.
- **The Consumer Protection Act 2019** set up the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) as a regulatory body in matters of wrong advertisements for the protection of the rights of consumers.
- Misleading advertisement has been defined under section 2(28) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- **The Programme and Advertising Codes** underline

that advertisements must not give claims that are difficult to prove, these are prescribed under the Cable Television Network Rules 1994.

CODE ON SOCIAL SECURITY, 2020

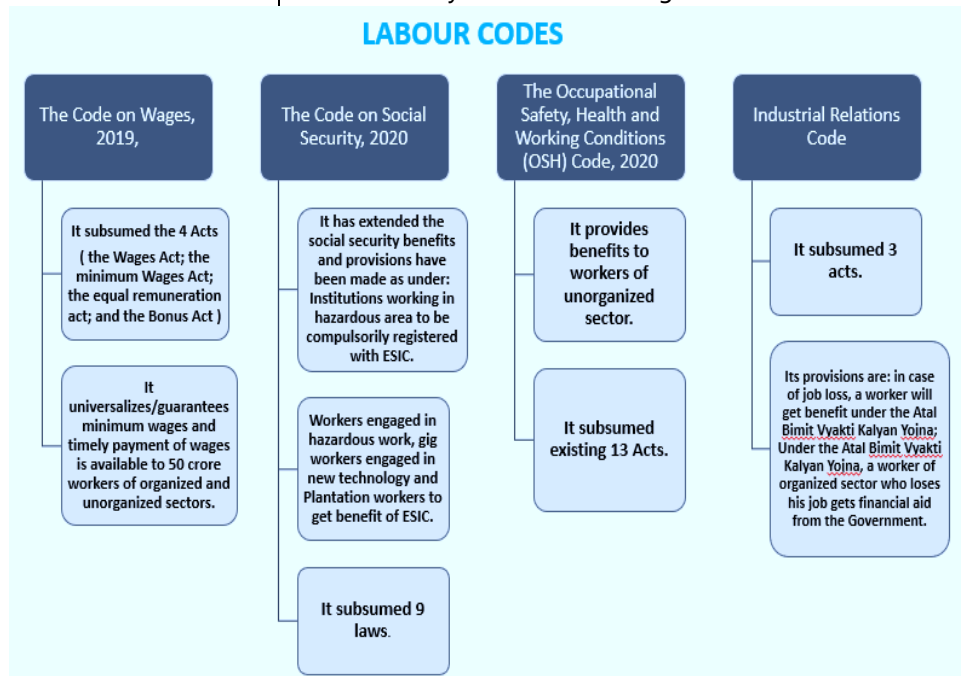
News Excerpt:

Recently, Minister of State for Labour and Employment stated in Lok Sabha that for the first time, the definition of 'gig worker' and 'platform worker' has been provided in the Code on Social Security, 2020.

Labour code:

Code on Social Security, 2020

- The Code on Social Security, 2020, provides for **framing suitable social security schemes for gig workers and platform workers regarding life and disability cover, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, old age protection, etc.**
- The Code also provides for setting up a **Social Security Fund**, and one of the fund's sources is a contribution from an aggregator between 1 and 2% of its annual turnover, subject to the limit of 5% of the amount paid or payable by an aggregator to such workers.
- The Government launched the **e-Shram portal** on 26.08.2021 to register and create a **Comprehensive National Database of Unorganized Workers**, including gig and platform workers.
- The Code on Social Security 2020 envisages social security benefits through the formulation of



schemes for gig and platform workers. These schemes can be implemented through the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) and Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), which have previously provided social security benefits to organised sector workers.

- The Code empowered the Central Government to set up social security funds for unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers. The 2020 code states that the **central Government will set up such a fund.**
 - Further, state governments will also set up and administer separate social security funds for unorganised workers.
- The Code envisages that the appropriate Government may set up a toll-free call centre or

Definitions on Code

- **Gig workers:** Gig workers refer to workers outside the traditional employer-employee relationship.
- **Platform workers:** Those who access organisations or individuals through an online platform and provide services or solve specific problems.
- **Unorganised worker:** One who works in the unorganised sector, and includes workers not covered by the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, or other provisions of the Bill (such as provident fund or gratuity).

Platform Economy:

- Platform economy operates through two business models: Crowd work and Work-on-demand via apps.
 - **Crowd-workers** operate online through platforms that connect vast numbers of clients, organisations, and businesses across borders.
 - **'Work-on demand via apps'** refers to place-based and geographically limited work, facilitated by platforms.
- The platform economy generates new avenues of employment.
- Platform economy jobs are associated with job insecurity, earnings volatility, and lack of social protection schemes and career advancement opportunities. Importantly, by shifting health, financial, and production risks from the client and platform to the worker, this relationship makes workers more vulnerable and insecure.
- Platform workers are self-employed workers or independent contractors.

helpline or such facilitation centres, etc., for unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers, as may be considered necessary from time to time to disseminate information on available social security schemes, facilitate filing, processing and forwarding of application forms for their registration, assist them in obtaining registration, and to facilitate their enrolment in the social security schemes.

HEALTH FOR ALL: WHO

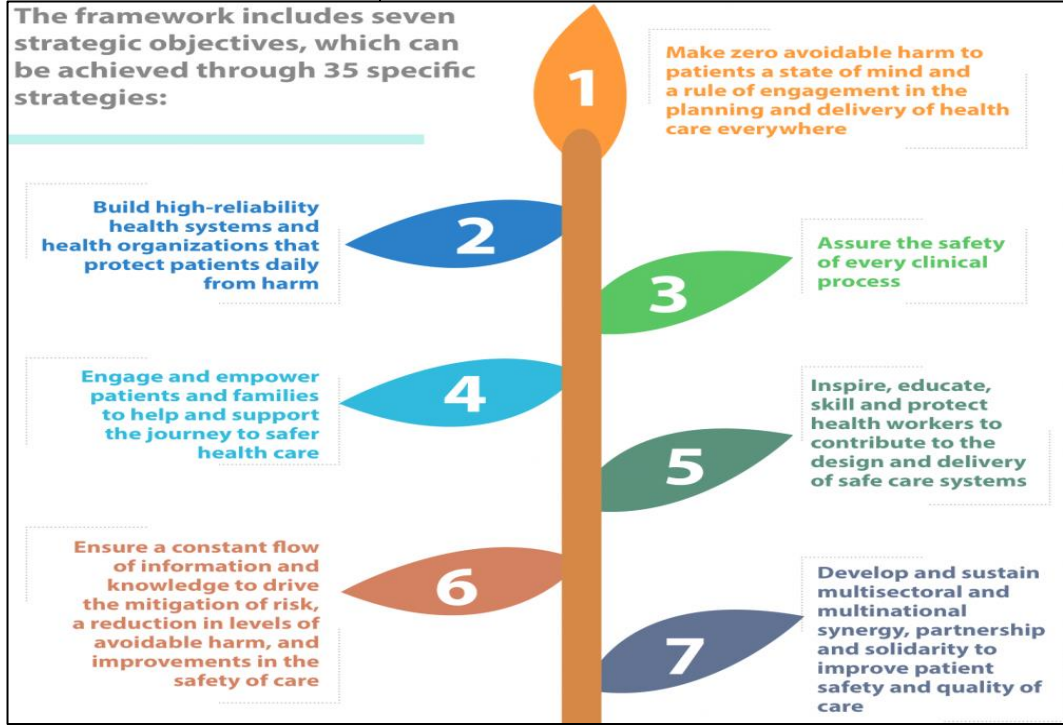
News Excerpt

The World Health Organization (WHO) launched a roadmap to focus on the links between health and sustainable, inclusive and innovation-led economic growth during the ongoing **76th World Health Assembly (WHA)**. The WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All has outlined a bold new path to reorient economies to deliver what matters — health for all.

Pre-Connect

- Globally, the WHO is fully committed to achieving "Health for All" through Universal Health Coverage (UHC), meaning that all people can access essential health services without financial hardships.
- **The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health** as the totality of mental and social well-being and happiness beyond physical fitness and the absence of disease and disability.
- This means that we cannot achieve health in its wider definition without addressing health determinants, and it needs an intersectoral convergence beyond medical and health departments, such as women and child development, food and nutrition, agriculture and animal husbandry, civil supplies, rural water supply and sanitation, social welfare, tribal welfare, education, and forestry.
- The slogan **"Health for All by 2000"** was **proposed by Halfdan Mahler** and endorsed by the WHA in 1977. This slogan had an inherent implication, i.e., "for All", which means universalisation. Thus, nobody is denied this, and everybody is eligible without being discriminated against based on financial status, gender, race, place of residence, affordability to pay or any other factors.
- **Universal Health Care/coverage (UHC) was implied as early as 1977.**

- Through its National Health Policy 1983, India committed itself to the 'Health for All' goal by 2000.
- The Report recommended policy approaches- The choices on channelling and shaping public and private investments will determine whether the world continues to struggle with the consequences of major health challenges or succeeds in creating a new political economy based on health for all.



- The Report further recommended reorienting economies to deliver health for all across four interrelated themes:
 - Value:** valuing and measuring what matters through new economic metrics;
 - Finance:** how to finance health for all as a long-term investment, not a short-term cost;
 - Innovation:** how to advance health innovation for the common good;
 - Capacity:** strengthening dynamic public sector capacity to achieve health for all.

Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978:

This emerged as a major milestone of the twentieth century in the field of Public Health it identified primary health care as the key to attaining the goal of health for all.

PATIENT SAFETY RIGHTS CHARTER FOR 2021-2030

News Excerpt:

The WHO released the first-ever Patient Safety Rights (PSR) Charter outlining the core rights of all patients in the context of healthcare safety in September 2023.

Patient Safety Rights Charter:

- The Charter outlines the **core rights of all patients** in the context of the safety of healthcare and

provides an action plan on the **Global Patient Safety Framework for 2021-2030.**

- Aim:** It seeks to assist governments and other stakeholders in ensuring that patients' voices are heard and their 'Right to Safe Healthcare' is protected.

INTENSIFIED MISSION INDRADHANUSH (IMI) 5.0

News Excerpt:

The Immunization drive, known as 'Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 5.0, began in Tamil Nadu.

About the Mission:

- Aim:**
 - To focus on reaching zero-dose children (children who failed to receive any routine vaccination) aged between 0-5 years and pregnant women.
 - To eliminate measles and rubella, ensure every child under 5 has completed the **two-dose Measles and Rubella Containing Vaccine (MRCV) schedule.**
- Mission Indradhanush (MI) is a special campaign under the **Universal Immunization Program (UIP) umbrella scheme.**
- Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

- The programme provides free vaccines against 12 life-threatening diseases - Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Hepatitis B, Pneumonia and Meningitis due to Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Rotavirus diarrhoea.
 - The program is generally conducted in the **areas of low immunization** coverage to vaccinate all the children and pregnant women left out or dropped out from Routine Immunization.

Progress of the IMI program over the years:

Missions	Coverage
Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2017	To reach every child under two years of age and all those pregnant women left uncovered under the routine immunization programme.
Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0 2019	Its objective was to attain a minimum of 90 percent nationwide immunization coverage by 2022 .
Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0 2021	It primarily concentrated on providing vaccines to children and pregnant women who had not received immunization shots due to the Covid-19 pandemic .
Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 4.0 2022	To extend Routine Immunization (RI) services to children and pregnant women who have not been vaccinated or only partially vaccinated .

FOCUS ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH TO STRIKE DEMOGRAPHIC GOLD

News Excerpt:

India, home to over 250 million adolescents aged 10-19 years, grapples with **various mental health challenges among its youth, with depression emerging as a significant concern.**

10th October is marked as World Mental Health Day to spread awareness and education about mental health issues worldwide.

- The first time World Mental Health Day was observed in 1992. It started as an annual World Federation for Mental Health activity by the then Deputy Secretary-General Richard Hunter.
- **The theme for 2023:** 'Mental Health as a Universal Human Right'.

Initiatives to Promote Mental Health:

- **National Mental Health Program (NMHP):** Since 1982, the Government has been implementing the NMHP to address the enormous burden of mental disorders and a shortage of qualified professionals in the mental health field.
- **The Mental Health Care Act of 2017** guarantees every affected person access to mental healthcare and treatment from government-run or funded services.
 - It decriminalized suicide in India.
- **Tele-MANAS App:** The National Tele Mental Health Programme of India launched a 24 x 7 tele-mental health facility through 51 functional Tele-MANAS (Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System) cells.
- **National Youth Policy:** The policy is aligned with the UN SDGs and recognizes young people as a critical national demographic, giving special attention to mostly overlooked issues such as mental health, substance abuse disorders, etc.
- **Draft UMMEED (Understand, Motivate, Manage, Empathise, Empower, Develop) Guidelines:** These are prepared by the Union Ministry of Education for schools to prevent student suicides with the underlying theme of "Every Child Matters",
- **Kiran Helpline:** In 2020, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the 'Kiran' toll-free helpline to support people experiencing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts, etc.
- **Paro Declaration-** It was adopted by the WHO South-East Asia Region, committing to Universal Access to People-centered Mental Health Care and Services.

INDIA'S FIRST DISTRICT-LEVEL STUDY ON HYPERTENSION

News Excerpt:

A recent district-wise analysis of hypertension flags disparities in healthcare practices in India.

About the study:

- For the first time in India, a district-level study on hypertension was published in JAMA Network by the American Medical Association conducted by AIIMS Delhi in collaboration with scientists from Europe and the US.
- The scientists used the hypertension data from the **National Family Health Survey data NFHS-5** as a base report, released in May 2022.

- An **output dashboard** was created as a part of the study and has gender-wise, area-wise, and educational-level data on hypertension.

Current Scenario of Hypertension in India:

- According to a **WHO report**, 188.3 million people in India suffer from hypertension, but only 37% get diagnosed, 30% start treatment, and 15% manage to keep their blood pressure under control.
- Nearly **4.6 million deaths** can be prevented in India **by 2040** if half of the hypertensive individuals can control their blood pressure.
- To tackle the issue, the Government launched an ambitious initiative this year to put 75 million people with hypertension or diabetes on treatment by 2025.

Key Outcomes from the Report:

- In South India:
 - Karnataka's four districts, namely, Chikmagalur, Shimoga, Udupi and Chitradurga, have a similar prevalence of hypertension.
- In Northeast India:
 - In Meghalaya, the districts of Garo, Jaintia, and Khasi Hills all have similar prevalences of hypertension. Still, the proportion of those diagnosed is much lower in Garo Hills than in Jaintia and Khasi Hills.

- The substantial variations across districts with respect to:
 - Blood pressure diagnosis (range: 6.3%-77.5%)
 - Treatment (range: 8.7%-97.1%)
 - Control (range: 2.7%-76.6%)
- **Raising a red flag:** The national mean hypertension values "hide considerable" variation at the district level.

GENDER DISPARITY AMONG ORGAN RECIPIENTS: NOTTO

News Excerpt:

Data from the **National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)** in India between 1995 and 2021 reveal a significant gender disparity among organ recipients.

About the news:

- NOTTO data shows a significant increase in overall transplant numbers in the country, reaching a record high in 2022.
 - **Delhi led in living donor transplants**, while Tamil Nadu remained a leader in deceased donor transplants involving organs from brain-dead patients.
- 4 out of 5 organ recipients during this period were

men, indicating a **notable imbalance** in healthcare access between genders.


- Legal safeguards are in place to prevent forced consent for organ donation from women under **the Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Rules, 2008.**

About NOTTO:

- It is set up under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It is the apex centre for the procurement and distribution of Organs and Tissues and the registry of Organs and Tissues Donation and Transplantation in the country.
- Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act 2011 has established two divisions:
 - National Human Organ and Tissue Removal

Indian Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI)

- **Indian Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI)** is a 5-year initiative involving the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medical Research, State Governments, and WHO-India.
- Hypertension is a serious, and growing, health issue in India today. There are an estimated 20 crore adults with hypertension, of whom approximately only 2 crores have it under control.
- **Aim:** To reduce premature mortality due to **non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 25% by 2025**. One of the nine voluntary targets includes **reducing the prevalence of high BP by 25% by 2025**.
- IHCI aims to accelerate progress towards the Government of India's NCD target by supplementing and intensifying evidence-based strategies to strengthen the building blocks of hypertension management and control.
- IHCI was launched in November 2017.
 - **Year 2017:** IHCI covered 26 districts across five states - Punjab, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra.
 - **Year 2020:** IHCI was expanded to 52 districts across ten states - Andhra Pradesh (1), Chhattisgarh (2), Karnataka (2), Kerala (4), Madhya Pradesh (6), Maharashtra (13), Punjab (5), Tamil Nadu (1), Telangana (13) and West Bengal (5).



- Storage Network National Biomaterial Centre (National Tissue Bank).

NATIONAL HEALTH CLAIM EXCHANGE (NHGX)

News Excerpt:

The National Health Authority (NHA) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IREDA) have joined hands to operationalize NHGX.

About:

- It is a digital health claims platform developed by NHA.
- Benefits: Seamless interoperability of health claims processing.
- **Objectives:**
 - Reduce receivable cycles and increase acceptance of cashless claims.
 - Standardized the health claims process.
 - Facilitate insurance innovation.

About National Health Authority (NHA):

- It is the apex body established on 2nd January 2019 to implement India's flagship public health insurance/assurance scheme, the "Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana."
- It has been entrusted with designing strategy, building technological infrastructure and implementing the "Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission" to create a National Digital Health Ecosystem.
- NHA is the successor of the **National Health Agency** and an attached office of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.

About IREDA (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority):

- It is a statutory body constituted by the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act 1999** under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance.
- It is tasked with regulating and licensing India's insurance and re-insurance industries.

ICMR FINDINGS ABOUT COVID-19

News Excerpt:

The Indian Council of Medical Research has identified past COVID-19 infection as one of the **risk factors** behind the sudden death of **young Indians**, reported from states since the pandemic days.

About ICMR:

- It is the **apex** body in India responsible for **coordinating** and **promoting** biomedical research.
- It is **neither** a statutory **nor** regulatory body.
- The Indian Government **funds** it through the Department of Health Research and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The ICMR hosts the **Clinical Trials Registry – India (CTRI)**, a free online public record system for clinical trial registration in India.
 - Trial registration at CTRI has become **mandatory** since **2009**, encouraging registration before the first participant's enrollment.
- The governing body of ICMR is presided over by the Union Health Minister of India and comprises **27 institutes/regional medical research centres**.

UNIQUE ID FOR DOCTORS

News Excerpt:

A **pilot assessment** system regarding **unique ID** has been conducted in eight colleges nationwide, with the **National Medical Commission (NMC)** consulting the stakeholders.

About:

- The **National Medical Register** will provide a unique identification number for all doctors in India, which is expected to be launched by the end of **next year**.
- The current Indian Medical Register, created using **data** from **state medical councils**, will be **replaced** by the new register.
 - The new one includes details like registration number, date of registration, place of work, medical qualifications, speciality, university, and year of passing, to be **updated every five years**.
- The new register will **allow doctors to seek licences in multiple states**.
- This dynamic register will **enable** people to **check** their **doctor's credentials**.

National Medical Commission:

- It is a **statutory body** established under the **National Medical Commission Act of 2019**.
- The Medical Council of India (**MCI**), founded in 1934, was superseded by the NMC.
- NMC **guarantees** high-quality medical education and training nationwide by maintaining the highest standards in healthcare education.

PROJECT COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

News Excerpt:

The Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have signed a Traditional and Complementary Medicine 'Project Collaboration Agreement' in Geneva.

About the Collaboration Agreement:

- The main objective of this agreement is to **standardize Traditional and Complementary Medical Systems**, integrate their **quality and safety aspects** into the mainstream of the **National Health System**, and disseminate them at the **international level**.
- To fulfil this objective, **WHO will prepare the Traditional Medicine Global Strategy 2025-34** with the support of the Ministry of AYUSH.
- Other major objectives of the agreement include efforts to **strengthen the system of training and practice** in the Complementary Medicine System '**Siddha**', formulation of guidelines for listing Traditional and Complementary Medicines, safety and related efforts, etc.
- The AYUSH Ministry will develop an **International Herbal Pharmacopoeia of Herbs** found in South-East Asia in collaboration with WHO.
- Under this agreement, efforts will be made to integrate evidence-based Traditional and Complementary Medicines with the National Health System, **to conserve and manage biodiversity and medicinal plants, etc.**

World Health Organization (WHO):

- Founded in **1948**, the WHO directs and coordinates international health within the United Nations system.
- It is headquartered in **Geneva**, Switzerland.
- The objective of WHO is to **attain the highest possible level of health for all people**.
- **Health**, as defined in the WHO Constitution, is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

REPORTS

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT

News Excerpt:

Recently, the World Happiness Report 2023 was released by the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network**.

Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

- The UN SDSN was launched under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General in 2012.
- SDSN promotes integrated approaches through education, research, policy analysis, and global cooperation to implement the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **Paris Agreement on Climate Change**.

About the World Happiness Report:

- The report is released annually as part of the International Day of Happiness celebration since 2012.
- Usually, reports rank global happiness in over 150 countries; this year, the report ranked 136 countries.
- The study also compares numerous quality-of-life criteria.
- The two **main principles** of the report are:
 - Identifying key elements that determine well-being and life evaluation across countries.
 - Happiness or life evaluation is measured through opinion surveys.
- The variable is given a populated weighted average score on a scale from 0 to 10 and is measured annually which is then measured over time in comparison with other nations.
- Bhutan uses Gross National Happiness as its primary development indicator.
- An international sample survey was used to compile the rankings of national happiness.

Variables for Ranking of Happiness

- Real social support
- GDP per capita
- Freedom of choice in one's life
- Healthy life expectancy
- Perceptions of corruption
- Generosity.

Key Findings:

- COVID-19 and other key problems had a considerable impact on the review of the 2023 World Happiness Report.
- **Three countries from the Scandinavian region topped** the initial three spots in the report.

- Finland has again topped the happiness index sixth time in a row followed by Denmark, Iceland, Israel, and the Netherlands.
- The United States, Britain, and France secured 15th, 19th and 21st positions in the index.
- According to the report, **India ranks at 125th position out of 136 countries, making it one of the least happy countries in the world.** It even lags behind its neighbouring nations like Nepal, China, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
- **At the very bottom of the list is Afghanistan.**
- Despite the Russia-Ukraine war, Russia ranked 70th,

DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS					
	Population	15-64 years	65+	TFR	Life expectancy
India	1,428.6 mn	68%	7%	2.0	72.5 yrs
China	1,425.7 mn	69%	14%	1.2	79 yrs
World	8,045 mn	65%	10%	2.3	73.5 yrs

UNFPA's State of World Population Report 2023

and Ukraine ranked 92nd, better than many countries. As per the report, between 2020 and 2021, compassion increased in both nations while compassion increased significantly in Ukraine but decreased in Russia in 2022.

India's Position

- India ranked 125th in Sustainable Development Solutions Network's World Happiness Report 2023, position has increased from 2021 (139) and 2022(136).
- Report analyses show that people's assessments of their quality of life declined by more than one full point on a scale of 0 to 10 over the previous ten years in India.

UN POPULATION REPORT

News Excerpt:

India is set to overtake China to become the world's most populous country by the middle of 2023, according to data released by the United Nations.

About:

- **United Nations Population Fund:** UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency and is formally named the United Nations Population Fund.
- **Mission:** To deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

- The organization was created in 1969, the same year the United Nations General Assembly declared that "parents have the exclusive right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."
- All UNFPA funding is voluntary. UNFPA mobilizes financial resources from governments and other partners to support programmes that aim to achieve the **"three zeros" – zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero harmful practices and gender-based violence** – and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Key points of the report:

Population Estimation:

- India's population is pegged to reach 142.86 crore against China's 142.57 crore. This shows India will have 29 lakhs more people than its Asian neighbour.
 - According to the report, **68 percent of India's total population is between the ages of 15 and 64 years**, which is considered the working population of a country.
 - About 25 percent is between 0-14 years; 18 percent between 10 and 19 years, 26 percent between 10 and 24 years, and 7 percent above 65 years.
- The United States is a distant third, with an estimated population of 34 crore, according to the data by the **State of World Population Report, 2023** of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).
 - The world's population hit the 800-crore mark in November 2022.
- Another UN Report, **World Population Prospects 2022**, said that by 2050, India's population would reach 166.8 crore, far exceeding China's declining population at 131.7 crore.
 - In 1950, India had 86.1 crore, while China had 114.4 crore.
- According to the UN projections, India's population is expected to grow for the next three decades, after which it will begin declining.
- The latest UNFPA report showed population growth in both India and China has been slowing, despite accounting for more than one-third of the estimated global population.

Population Growth Concentration:

- Contrary to the alarm bells about exploding numbers, **population trends everywhere point to slower growth and ageing societies.**

- Eight countries will account for half the projected growth in global population by 2050 — the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania — while two-thirds of people now live in a country where lifetime fertility corresponds with zero growth.

Life Expectancy:

- The average life expectancy at birth **for males in India is 71 years, while for females, it is 74 years.**
 - The life expectancy for males globally was projected 71 and 76 for females.
 - For developed regions, the average life expectancy for males was projected at 77 and 83 for females — the highest of all.
 - For less developed regions, the ages are 70 for males and 74 for females, while for least developed countries, it is 63 for males and 68 for females.

Gender Data:

- The report brought up worrying statistics regarding gender rights in India.
- The adolescent birth rate per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 was 11, while 23 per cent of girls were married off before the age of 18.
 - Violence by an intimate partner in the last 12 months was reported by 18 per cent of women, while 66 per cent of women had decision-making on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.
 - A little over 80 per cent of women had some say in decision-making regarding their own healthcare.

Fertility Rate:

- India's total fertility rate (births per woman in the reproductive age) is estimated at 2.0, lower than the world average of 2.3.
 - Developed regions projected a fertility rate of 1.5, less developed regions 2.4 and least developed countries 3.9.

PRETERM BIRTHS IN 2020: WHO REPORT

News Excerpt:

According to the World Health Organization's Born Too Soon: Decade of Action on Preterm Birth Report, India recorded the highest number of preterm births in 2020.

About Preterm Birth:

- Preterm birth is the birth of a baby before the completion of 37 weeks of gestation and is also known as premature birth. (A baby is considered a stillborn who dies any time after 22 weeks of pregnancy but before or during the birth.)
- There are different stages of preterm birth: **extremely preterm (less than 28 weeks)**, **very preterm (28 to 32 weeks)** and **moderate to late preterm (32 to 37 weeks)**.
- As per studies, of about 13% of babies born preterm, all babies born annually in India and India account for 23.4% of preterm births globally.

As per the report

- Approximately 9,00,000 children died in 2019 of complications of preterm birth.
- **India, Pakistan, Nigeria, China, and Ethiopia** accounted for 45% of pre-birth babies globally, putting these babies at high risk of mortality and "silent emergency".
- Bangladesh had the highest estimated preterm birth rate (16.2%), followed by Malawi and Pakistan.
- **India reported the highest number of preterm births**, with 30.16 lakh cases, followed by Pakistan, Nigeria and China.
- In India, West Bengal reported highest preterm births with 16% estimate, followed by Tamil Nadu (14%) and Gujarat (9%).
- However there has not been any change in preterm birth globally, as the rate remained same at 9.9% in 2020 similar to 2010.
- **Neonatal disorders** are the leading cause of the burden of disease.

Government Initiatives

- POSHAN Abhiyan
- Anemia Mukht Bharat Abhiyan
- National Food Security Act (2013)
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme
- Eat Right India and Fit India Movement.

- The “4 Cs” – **Conflict, Climate change, COVID-19 and the Cost-of-living crisis** are the major threats.
- Maternal COVID-19 was seen as a threat to babies, and infection was transmitted from mother to baby.
- High-income countries have better survival rates (9 in 10) than low-income countries (less than 1 in 10).
- Preterm birth is considered as the single largest killer of children under five years of age.

GLOBAL SLAVERY INDEX 2023

News Excerpt:

Walk Free Foundation released 'the Global Slavery Index 2023', citing the increasing prevalence of modern slavery worldwide.

About:

- As per the report, India, China, Russia, Indonesia, Turkey, and the U.S. are among the top G20 countries with the highest number of forced labourers.
- According to the Global Slavery Index 2023, **approximately 50 million individuals were estimated to be living in modern slavery in 2021**, marking an increase of 10 million people since 2016.
- The Asia and Pacific regions are home to the majority of individuals living in modern slavery, with India having a prevalence of the estimated percentage of the population living in modern slavery per 1000 people.
- This indicates that **approximately one in every 160 people worldwide is a victim of modern slavery**. The index ranks 160 countries based on their estimated prevalence of modern slavery per 1,000 individuals.
- Notably, countries such as North Korea (104.6), Eritrea (90.3), and Mauritania (32.0) have the highest prevalence, where modern slavery is pervasive and often supported by the state. Conversely, countries like Switzerland (0.5), Norway (0.5), and Germany (0.6) exhibit the lowest prevalence, reflecting robust governance and effective responses to combat modern slavery.
- Modern slavery refers to various forms of exploitation that involve the severe deprivation of individuals' freedom, control, and dignity. It encompasses practices such as forced labour, human trafficking, debt bondage, child labour, and forced marriage.

NITI AAYOG'S ANNUAL HEALTH INDEX 2020-21

News Excerpt:

NITI Aayog's annual 'Health Index' for the Covid year of 2020-21 was released.

Key Points

- The Health Index is **based on a weighted composite score incorporating 24 health performance indicators**.
- The health index assesses states and UTs on two parameters – incremental performance (year-on-year progress) and overall performance.
- The states and UTs — categorized separately as 'larger states', 'smaller states' and UTs — are then ranked based on their scores.
- The three southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana emerged as the top performers among the 'larger states'.
- In terms of overall performance. Bihar (19th), Uttar Pradesh (18th) and Madhya Pradesh (17th) are at the bottom of the list.
- In terms of incremental performance, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Odisha emerged as the top three performers in 2020-21, as compared to their performance in 2019-20.
- Among the eight smaller states, Tripura has recorded the best overall performance, followed by Sikkim and Goa; Arunachal Pradesh (6th), Nagaland (7th) and Manipur (8th) are at the bottom. And among the eight UTs, Lakshadweep has been ranked as the top performer in terms of overall performance, while Delhi ranked at the bottom.

NATIONAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX

News Excerpt:

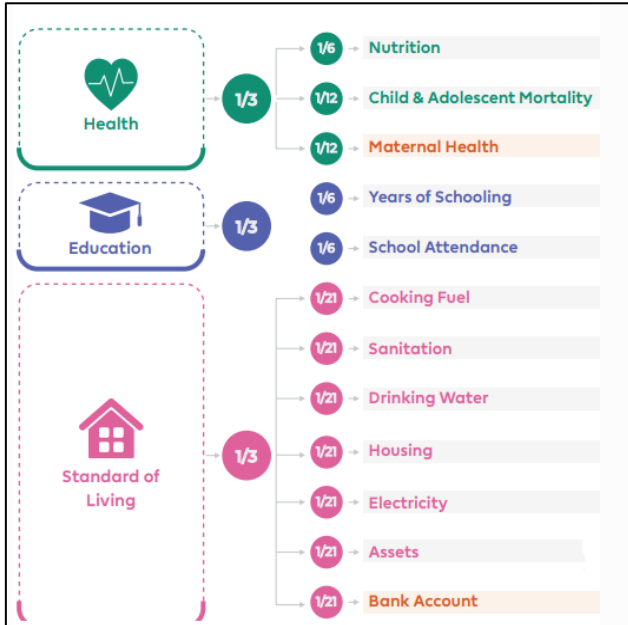
In a recent report published by Niti Aayog, India registered a decline in the number of "**multidimensional poor**" individuals, from 24.85 per cent in 2015-16 to 14.96 per cent in 2019-2021.

What is the Multidimensional Poverty Index?

- Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) captures overlapping deprivations in **health, education and living standards** and other broader qualitative aspects of life, like child mortality, housing conditions, and other basic services such as water

and sanitation to ascertain multidimensional poverty.

- Each of the parameters is assigned a value to calculate what is called a '**deprivation score**'. If it is more than 0.33, only then an individual is considered as 'Multidimensional poor'.



Highlights of the Multidimensional Poverty Index:

- **Headcount and Intensity of Poverty:** MPI is a major contribution towards achieving SDG target 1.2, which aims to reduce poverty in all its dimensions. This indicates that India is well on course to achieve the SDG target 1.2, much ahead of 2030.
- **Disparities across Rural and Urban Areas:** The incidence of poverty fell from 32.59% to 19.28% in rural areas compared to a decline from 8.65% to 5.27% in urban areas between 2015-16 and 2019-21.
- **Performance of States/UTs:** The MPI estimates show that States/UTs have displayed notable improvements in their MPI score from 2015-16 to 2019-21, as given below:
 - **Fastest Absolute Reduction in MPI (State-wise):** Bihar, the state with the highest MPI value in NFHS-4 (2015-16), saw the fastest reduction in MPI value in absolute terms with the proportion of multidimensional poor reducing from 51.89% to 33.76% in 2019-21. It was followed by Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
 - **Indicator-wise Comparison of Deprivations:** All the 12 indicators across the three dimensions

– Health, Education and Standard of Living – saw statistically significant reductions across the two time periods. Deprivations in sanitation (reduction by 21.8 % points) and cooking fuel (reduction by 14.6 % points) fell the most during the period from 2015-16 to 2019-21. Overall, progress in nutrition, years of schooling, sanitation, and cooking fuel have been the significant contributors to the decline in MPI value, though there is further scope to make improvements.



CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

News Excerpt:

The UN report on 'Children and Armed Conflict' said India has been "removed from the report in 2023" in view of measures taken by the Government to "better protect children".

About: This is the first time since 2010 that **India has not been named** in the report alongside countries like Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Lake Chad basin, Nigeria, Pakistan and the Philippines.

Measures taken- The Juvenile Justice Act and POCSO Act are being implemented, and child welfare committees have been established.

Articles-

- Right against exploitation (Articles 23–24).

- Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour (Article 23).
- Prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc. (Article 24).
- Right to freedom of religion (Article 25–28).
- Freedom of conscience.

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX – 2023

News Excerpt:

Alliance 2015, a peer network of seven European non-government organizations, recently released the Global Hunger Index 2023.

About the Global Hunger Index - 2023:

Global Observations:

- The 2023 GHI score for the world reflects a dangerous array of overlapping global and local crises, including the fallout of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, the **Russia-Ukraine war**, and **multiple violent conflicts** and **climate disasters** worldwide.
- Many countries are experiencing severe hunger in 2023, which is expected to worsen yearly.
- The Russia-Ukraine war contributed to global food price spikes in 2022, threatening food security.

Regional Observations:

- India's ranking in the Global Hunger Index 2023 **fell to 111 out of 125 countries from 107 in 2022**.
- India has the highest **child-wasting rate in the world at 18.7 percent**, reflecting acute undernutrition.
- With a score of 28.7, **India** has a level of hunger that is **"serious"**. India's neighbouring countries, Pakistan (102nd), Bangladesh (81st), Nepal (69th) and Sri Lanka (60th), fared better than it in the index.
- **South Asia and Africa South** of the Sahara are the world regions with the **highest hunger levels**, with a GHI score of 27 each, indicating severe hunger.
- Improving young people's **access to knowledge and education** is the key to strengthening their capacities to act as change agents in food systems transformation.

Indian Scenario:

- India has the **highest child-wasting rate** in the world, at 18.7 per cent, reflecting acute

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels. GHI scores are based on the values of four component indicators:¹



Undernourishment: the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.



Child wasting: the share of children under age five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition.



Child stunting: the share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.



Child mortality: the share of children who die before their fifth birthday, partly reflecting the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.

undernutrition. (Wasting is measured based on children's weight relative to their height.)

- According to the index, the rate of **undernourishment** in India stood at 16.6 per cent and under-five mortality at 3.1 percent.

India's Reservations about GHI:

● **Methodological issues:**

- 3 of the 4 indicators used are related to children's health and cannot represent the entire population.
- The 4th indicator, estimating the Proportion of the Undernourished (PoU) population, is based on an opinion poll conducted on a small sample size of 3000.

- **GHI ignores efforts made by the Government** to ensure food security for the population. E.g.- IMF lauds **PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana** for preventing extreme poverty.

- **Scores not comparable across years:** The index makes some specific years with benchmark values as reference years, there is no way of knowing whether India did better or worse than the previous year.

- **Over and underestimation:** Using a uniform calorie benchmark to arrive at deficiency prevalence for India, GHI fails to recognize the enormous regional imbalances. E.g.- The Kerala and Tamil Nadu population may get counted as calorie deficient despite being better in nutritional outcome indicators.

- GHI puts a higher emphasis on undernutrition than on hunger and its hidden forms, including micronutrient deficiencies. It should be more precisely called 'The Global Human Nourishment Index.'

- The prevalence of **anaemia in women** aged between 15 and 24 years stood at 58.1 percent. The Women and Child Development Ministry said the index suffers "serious methodological issues and shows a malafide intent".

HUNGER HOTSPOTS: FAO-WFP

News Excerpt:

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (**FAO**) and the World Food Programme (**WFP**) have released the report "**Hunger Hotspots**", which predicts a worsening of **food insecurity** in **18** hunger hotspots, including **22 countries** from **November 2023 to April 2024**.

Key findings of the Report:

- In the hunger hotspots, parts of the population will likely face a significant **deterioration** of already high levels of acute **food insecurity**, putting lives and livelihoods at risk.
- **Highest concerns - hotspots with catastrophic conditions:**

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO):

- It is a **specialized agency** of the **United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- It was founded in **1945** and headquartered in **Rome**. **India** is a member of FAO.
- Its goal is to achieve **food security for all** and ensure people have regular access to enough **high-quality food** to lead active, healthy lives.
- With **195 members** - 194 countries and the European Union, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide.
- **World Food Day** is celebrated on **16th October** every year to mark the anniversary of the FAO.

World Food Programme (WFP):

- It is a **humanitarian organization founded in 1961** that saves and changes lives, delivers food assistance in emergencies, and works with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.
- For its efforts to combat hunger and its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas, WFP was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2020**.

- **Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan, and Sudan** are among the countries with the highest concern level due to their populations **facing starvation or risk of catastrophic conditions**.
- **Palestine** was added due to the escalating **conflict** in October 2023, requiring urgent attention due to critical food insecurity and aggravating factors.
- **Very High concerns - hotspots with deteriorating critical conditions:**
 - Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (**DRC**), Ethiopia, Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen are high-risk hotspots.
 - They have high levels of acute **food insecurity** and worsening drivers expected to intensify **life-threatening conditions**.
- Since the May 2023 edition, **Chad, Djibouti, Niger, Palestine, and Zimbabwe** have been **added** to the list of hunger hotspot countries/territories.

Country-wise critical drivers/ risk narratives of food insecurity:

- **Asia and Pacific:**
 - Afghanistan: Protracted economic crisis.
 - Pakistan: Economic deterioration.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Below-average rainfall, high prices and above-average seasonal hurricanes.
- **West Africa and the Sahel:** Conflict.

Food insecurity drivers:

- **Organized violence and conflict risks:**
 - Armed violence, mainly civilian targeting, is likely to continue driving global **displacement**. The **Gaza Strip's** hostilities are expected to intensify humanitarian issues, with potential regional implications.
 - Instability and violence in the **Sahel region**, including **recent coups** in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, are also escalating. The withdrawal of peacekeeping missions from Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Somalia could amplify security voids, allowing increased Non-State Armed Group (**NSAG**) activities and attacks against civilians.

- Insecurity and conflicts are also expected to exacerbate **food access**, leading to displacement, **market disruption**, and **abandoned cultivated areas**, further deepening food crises.
- **Economic risks:**
 - The global economic outlook for 2024 is **sluggish**, with **tight** monetary policies following a decline in 2023.
 - International **food prices** remain **high** but are expected to rise due to oil price dynamics and El Nino conditions.
 - Low- and middle-income countries face challenges in **importing goods**, with **high** commodity **prices**, weak currencies, and depleted foreign exchange **reserves**.
 - Limited economic access and reduced **donor support** further exacerbate the situation.
- **Natural hazard risks:**
 - Hunger hotspots like Afghanistan, Haiti, Palestine, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Malawi, Uganda, and Cox's Bazar face ongoing **reductions** and **gaps** in emergency agriculture, food, and livelihood assistance.
 - **Weather extremes** like heavy rains, tropical storms, cyclones, flooding, drought, and climate variability drive acute food insecurity.
 - **El Nino**, which peaked in September 2023, is expected to persist in the coming six months, **negatively** impacting Southeast Asia and Latin America regions.

RISE IN ROAD ACCIDENTS

News Excerpt:

The annual Report on “**Road Accidents in India-2022**” has been published by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)**.

Key findings of the Report:

- India experienced a **12% increase** in road accidents in 2022, reaching **over 4.6 lakh**, resulting in **19 deaths per hour**, with **53 accidents** occurring **every hour** in the country.
- Out of the total **accidents** recorded -
 - **32.9%** of the accidents took place on **National Highways**, including Expressways,
 - **23.1%** took place on **State Highways**,
 - **43.9%** on **Other Roads**.
- Out of the total **fatalities** reported -

- **36.2%** were on **National Highways**,
- **24.3%** were on **State Highways**,
- **39.4%** were on **Other Roads**.
- For the **fourth consecutive year** in 2022, the **fatal road accident victims** largely constitute young people in the productive age groups.
 - **66.5 %** of victims **were young adults** in the age group of **18-45 years**.
 - **83.4 %** of total fatalities were people in the working age group (**18-60 years**).
- **Two-wheelers** accounted for the **highest share** in total accidents and fatalities, followed by light vehicles.
 - The share of two-wheeler riders in total fatality was the highest (44.5%), followed by pedestrian road users, with **19.5%** of persons **killed** in road accidents.

State-related findings:

- **Tamil Nadu** recorded the **highest number** of road accidents on **National Highways** in 2022, followed by **Madhya Pradesh** (11.8%).
- **Uttar Pradesh** topped the states regarding **fatalities** due to road accidents, followed by **Tamil Nadu** (10.6%).

Causes of accidents:

- **Over-speeding** (71.2%) was a major killer, followed by **driving on the wrong side** (5.4%).
- Human error, road environment and vehicular condition.

Rural-Urban scenario:

- Rural Areas: **68%** of **road accident deaths**.
- **Urban areas: 32%** of total accident deaths.
- **Million Plus Cities** (fifty in number)- **16.6%** of the total number of **accidents** and **10.1%** of total accident **fatalities**.

Measures taken by MoRTH:

- **Education Measures:**
 - Publicity measures and **awareness campaigns** are done through social media, electronic media, and print media.
 - **Scheme** to provide **financial assistance** to various agencies for administering **Road Safety Advocacy**.
 - Observance of **National Road Safety Month/Week** every year.
 - Scheme for setting up of Institute of Driving Training & Research (**IDTRs**), Regional Driving Training Centres (**RDTCs**) and Driving Training

Centres (DTCs) at state/district level across the Country.

- **Engineering Measures:**
 - **Road engineering:**
 - Road Safety Audit (RSA) of all highway projects has been made mandatory at all stages.
 - High priority is given to identifying and rectifying **black spots /accident spots** on National Highways.
 - Five stretches of NH with more accidents/blackspots are being developed as **Model Safe Roads**.
 - The **Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e-DAR) Project** has been initiated to establish a central repository for reporting, management and analysis of road accident data across the country.
 - **Vehicle engineering:**
 - Mandatory provision of an **airbag for the passenger** seated on the front seat of a vehicle next to the driver.
 - Norms related to safety measures for **children below four years of age** riding or being carried on a motorcycle.
 - Seat Belt Reminder (SBR), Overspeed warning system, **Reverse Parking Alert System**, Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS), Crash Norms, and **Vehicle Scrapping Policy**.
- **Enforcement Measures:**
 - **The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2019** provides strict penalties for ensuring compliance and enhancing deterrence for violation of traffic rules and strict enforcement through technology.
 - **Electronic Monitoring and Enforcement of Road Safety rules** specify the detailed provisions for placement of electronic enforcement devices, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), etc.
- **Emergency Care:**
 - Rules for the protection of **Good Samaritan**.
 - Enhanced **compensation of victims of hit-and-run motor accidents**.
 - National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) provisions for **ambulances with paramedical staff**/Emergency Medical Technicians/Nurses at **toll plazas**.

WHO GLOBAL TUBERCULOSIS REPORT 2023

News Excerpt:

The **Global Tuberculosis (TB) 2023 report** recently released by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** revealed that India accounted for the highest number of TB cases in the world in 2022, accounting for **27% of the global burden**.

Key Highlights of the Report:

Global:

- 7.5 million new cases of TB were recorded in 2022, the highest figure since 1995.
- 30 countries were responsible for 87% of the world's TB cases in 2022.
- **Top 8 high-burden countries:** India (27%), Indonesia (10%), China (7.1%), Philippines (7%), Pakistan (5.7%), Nigeria (4.5%), Bangladesh (3.6%), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (3.0%).
- The net reduction from 2015 to 2022 was 8.7%, far from the WHO End TB Strategy milestone of a 50% reduction by 2025.
- The treatment success rates have improved to **88% for people treated for drug-susceptible TB and 63% for people with MDR-TB**.

India:

- India recorded 2.8 million (28.2 Lakh) TB cases in 2022, with a case fatality ratio of 12%.
- 1.1 lakh cases were recorded in India with **Multidrug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB)**.

About Tuberculosis (TB):

- It is a **bacterial** infection primarily affecting the lungs.
- **Agent:** Mycobacterium Tuberculosis
- **Transmission:** Communicable, Spread from person to person by inhaling the tiny droplets from coughs or sneezes of an infected person.
- **Types of TB:**
 - **Latent TB:** The person carries the infection, but there are no symptoms, and it is not contagious. It lies dormant in the body; the immune system prevents it from spreading to other parts. But it may become active one day.
 - **Active TB:** The immune system weakens, and it is unable to prevent it. Then, it spreads to the lungs or other body parts. The symptoms start developing, and they become contagious.
 - **Drug-Resistant TB:**

- Multidrug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB): It is ineffective or resistant towards the two most potent first-line drugs, **Isoniazid and Rifampicin**. MDR-TB becomes treatable through the second line of drugs.
- **Extensive Drug Resistant TB (XDR-TB)**: It is a more severe form of MDR-TB as it becomes resistant towards the first line as well as the second line of drugs, leaving the patients with no further treatment options.

India's efforts to eliminate TB:

- **National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP)**: It aims to reduce the TB burden by 2025 strategically.
- **Ni-kshay Portal**: The Indian Government has launched an online portal to track the notified TB cases.
- **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan**: To augment community involvement to reach India's target of eliminating TB by 2025.
- **Setting up of Machines and Laboratories**: 4760 Molecular diagnostic machines cover all districts of the country. Also, 79 Line probe assay laboratories and 96 Liquid culture testing labs have been set up to diagnose MDR and XDR TB.
- **Ni-kshay Mitras**: The Government launched the **community engagement program** to remove the social stigma associated with it. Under this program, 71,000 Ni-Kshay Mitras have adopted 10 lakh TB patients.
- **Availability of New Drugs: Bedaquilline and Delamanid** are provided for free for TB patients.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CRIME RECORDS BUREAU (NCRB)

News Excerpt:

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs released the 70th edition of the annual 'Crime in India' Report, which contains an exhaustive set of crime statistics for the year 2022.

About the Report:

- The **National Crime Records Bureau publishes the Report under the Ministry of Home Affairs**. This is the oldest and the most prestigious publication brought out by NCRB.
- The data for the Report is **collected by the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB)** from the District Crime Records Bureau (DCRB) and sent to NCRB at

the **end of every calendar year** under the reference.

Observations made by the Report:

Key Highlights:

- **Overall Crime**: A total of 58,24,946 cognizable crimes comprising 35,61,379 Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes and 22,63,567 Special & Local Laws (SLL) crimes were registered in 2022. It shows a decline of 4.5% in case registration over 2021. During 2022, registration of cases under IPC and SLL Crimes have declined **by 2.8% and 7.0%, respectively, over 2021**.
- The crime rate registered per lakh population has declined from 445.9 in 2021 to 422.2 in 2022.
- The majority of cases under crime against women under IPC were registered under '**Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives**' (31.4%), followed by '**Kidnapping & Abduction of Women**' (19.2%), '**Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty**' (18.7%), and '**Rape**' (7.1%). The population's crime rate registered per lakh women was 66.4 in 2022 compared to 64.5 in 2021.
- **Cyber Crime**: There has been a sharp increase in Cyber Crime Cases registered in States and 19 Metro cities. A total of 65,893 cases were registered under Cyber Crimes, showing an increase of 24.4% in registration over 2021 (52,974 cases). The crime rate under this category increased from 3.9 in 2021 to 4.8 in 2022.
- **Extortion and human trafficking**: A total of 501 incidents of murder were reported in the city. It also recorded 106 cases of human trafficking. At least 492 minor boys were trafficked in Delhi as compared to 113 girls in 2022 — all of whom were recovered.
- The State/UT reporting the highest Charge-sheeting Rate under IPC Crimes are Kerala (96.0%), Puducherry (91.3%), and West Bengal (90.6%).
- **Acid Attack**: West Bengal reported 31 incidents of acid attacks, with 35 victims throughout the state. There were seven victims in seven incidents of "attempt to acid attack." Uttar Pradesh, with 25 victims in 23 incidents and one incident of an attempt to acid attack, is second on the list, and Madhya Pradesh, with 11 victims in seven incidents, is third.

- **Delhi unsafe for Women**: Delhi is the most unsafe metropolitan city for women in the country,

recording an average of three rape cases daily, according to the annual Report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

- Delhi recorded 14,158 incidents of crime against women in 2022, the highest number among 19 metropolitan cities for the third consecutive year, with about 186.9 crimes reported for every 1,00,000 women.
- **Awareness is rising:**
 - The **increase in cases registered** for incidents of crime against women also reflects police efforts to check crime.
 - The number of unreported cases has decreased as more women register cases. According to the latest NCRB data, 7,400 incidents of crime against children were recorded in the city, which included 22 incidents of murder.
- **Other Metropolitan cities:**
 - **Registration decreased:** In the 19 Metropolitan cities -Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi, Ghaziabad, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Kozhikode, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna, Pune and Surat - crimes registered have decreased by 10.4% over 2021.
 - IPC crimes registered have declined by 1.7%, and SLL crimes registered have decreased by 27.4% over 2021.

WHO'S WORLD MALARIA REPORT 2023

News Excerpt:

According to a **new WHO World Malaria Report 2023**, Malaria cases continue to dip in India.

About World Malaria Report:

The World Malaria Report 2023 presents progress against several important health and development goals in global efforts to reduce the burden of malaria overall and eliminate the disease where possible.

- **These goals are outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework:**
 - The World Health Organization (WHO) **Global technical strategy for malaria 2016–2030 (GTS)**
 - The RBM Partnership to **End Malaria** (formerly known as Roll Back Malaria) **Action** and Investment to **Defeat Malaria 2016–2030**

- For most indicators, the Report covers the **period 2000–2022**.

Key highlights of the Report:

- **Indian Scenario:** Contrasting the global trend, **India continued to witness a decline in malaria cases and deaths in 2022** (a decrease of 30% and 34%), according to a new WHO World Malaria Report 2023. There were around 33 lakh malaria cases and 5,000 deaths in India last year.
 - Globally, there were 249 million cases in 2022, 5 million more than in 2021.
 - According to the **National Institute of Malaria Research**, the decline in malaria cases and deaths in 2022 was due to **good preventive and case management strategies, effective vector control tools, point-of-care diagnostics, and prompt treatment** at the community level.

Global Scenario: According to the World Malaria Report 2023, the number of malaria cases globally dropped from 243 million in 2000 to 233 million in 2019 and increased during the pandemic.

WHO on Malaria trends in South-East Asia Region:

- The WHO South-East Asia Region had **nine malaria-endemic countries** in 2022, accounting for 5.2 million cases and contributing to 2% of the burden of malaria cases globally.
- In 2022, India accounted for about 65.7% of all malaria cases in the region.
- Between 2000 and 2022, malaria cases **decreased by 77%, from 22.8 million in 2000 to 5.2 million in 2022**, and incidence decreased by 83%, from 17.6 to 3.0 per 1000 population at risk.
 - **India and Indonesia** accounted for about **94% of all malaria deaths** in this region in 2022. **Between 2020 and 2022**, all countries in the region in which malaria deaths occurred reported an **increase in the malaria mortality rate, except for India**.
 - The methods used to estimate the burden of malaria cases and deaths depend on the quality of the **National Surveillance Systems** and the **Availability of Data** over time.

Recommendations by World Malaria Report 2023:

- The currently followed operational strategy focuses on WHO/GMP's role but also acknowledges the importance of a concerted effort across the ecosystem to accelerate progress towards the **GTS 2030 targets**. It is, therefore, fully aligned with

both the **GTS** and **WHO's 14th General Programme of Work**.

- The **WHO Global Malaria Programme (WHO/GMP)** has developed a departmental operational strategy for the **2024–2030 period**.
- **Recommendations on Vector Control:**
 - WHO published recommendations to cover two new classes of dual-ingredient insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs) with different modes of action:
 - **Pyrethroid-chlorfenapyr nets**, which combine a pyrethroid and a pyrrole insecticide to enhance the killing effect of the net and
 - **Pyrethroid-pyriproxyfen nets** combine a pyrethroid with an insect growth regulator that disrupts mosquito growth and reproduction.
- **Recommendation to Rollout of the RTS, S/AS01 malaria vaccine:**
 - This kind of vaccine allocation was determined by applying the principles outlined in the vaccine allocation framework, which prioritizes doses to areas of highest need, where the risk of malaria illness and death among children is highest.
 - This allocation round uses the supply of vaccine doses available to Gavi via the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- **Recommendation for a second malaria vaccine, R21/Matrix-M:**
 - The addition of the R21 malaria vaccine to complement the ongoing rollout of the first malaria vaccine, RTS, is expected to result in sufficient vaccine supply to benefit children living in areas where malaria is a major public health problem.
 - Tens of thousands of young lives could be saved every year with the broad rollout of these malaria vaccines.

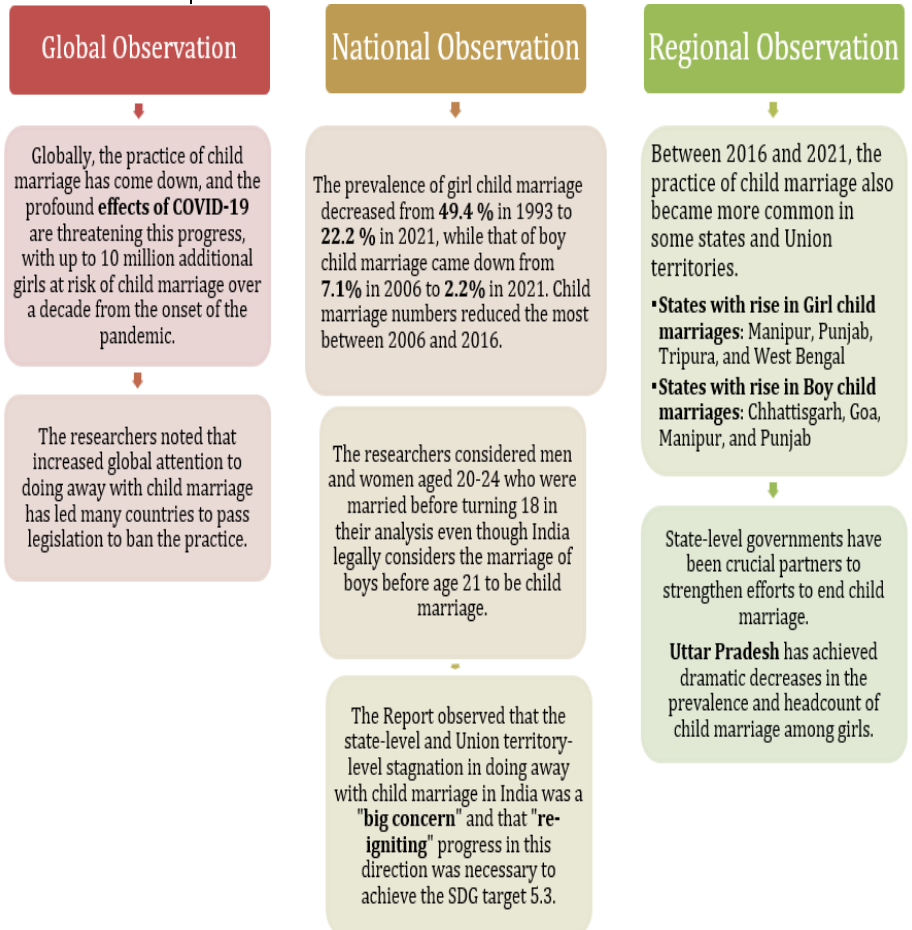
LANCET REPORT ON CHILD MARRIAGES IN INDIA

News Excerpt:

A study published in the Lancet Global Health talks about the declining prevalence of child marriage in India.

About:

- The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** sees child marriage as a **"violation of human rights"** as it "compromises the development of girls and boys".
- Child marriage is often the result of entrenched gender inequality, making girls disproportionately affected by the practice.
- Ending child marriage is therefore seen to be critical to achieving the **UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5**, which is to **"achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" by 2030**.
 - **SDG target 5.3** seeks to **"eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation"**.



Highlights of the Reports:

- According to the study published, **1/5th of girls** and about **1/6th of boys** in India are married, with the progress made towards eliminating the practice of child marriage stagnating in recent years.

Government Interventions for preventing Child marriages:

- **In 1929**, the Imperial Legislative Council of earlier British India passed the **Child Marriage Restraint Act** to curb child marriages, which was amended later on several occasions in independent India.
- **In 1978**, the amendment to the act fixed the minimum legal age at marriage for **girls to 18 years** and **boys to 21 years**.
- **In 2006**, the act was renamed the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act** and has punishable provisions in case of its violation. It also empowers the state to curb child marriages through community sensitization and awareness policies and programs.
- Regarding the variation in the effective implementation of the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act** in the context of a highly diversified socio-cultural milieu, norms, and practices associated with marriage, studies in the past have documented tremendous intra-state and inter-state variation in the child marriage rates.

INDIA AGEING REPORT 2023

News Excerpt:

Population ageing in India is an inevitable and irreversible demographic reality associated with a welcome improvement in the country's health and medical care system.

About the report:

- India Ageing Report 2023 focuses on the **institutional arrangements** that undergird the **National Policy for Older Persons implementation in India**.
- The report pools existing knowledge on population ageing in India and **maps senior-centric activities carried out by governmental** and non-governmental organizations working with the elderly.
- Population ageing is associated with a rise in the proportion of the population termed as 'old', usually at **60 or 65 years and above**.
- Population ageing has been more pronounced in developed nations as they have passed through

their demographic transition from high levels of fertility and mortality to lower levels, ahead of many developing countries.

Indian Scenario:

- **Differentials across states:** Southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, along with states like Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Punjab, have a higher proportion of senior citizens (persons above 60 years of age) than states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttarakhand.
- **The feminization of ageing:** According to Census 2011, the sex ratio among senior citizens was 1,033 females per 1,000 males, with elderly women having a higher life expectancy than elderly men.
- **Ruralization of the elderly:** The Census 2011 also highlighted that approximately 71 percent of the senior citizens lived in rural areas.
- **More women aged 80 years and above:** During 2000–2050, the population aged 80 years and above is projected to grow 700 percent, with predominance of widows and highly dependent very older women.
- **Decline in health status, income insecurity and compulsion to work:** Loss of spouse and consequent living arrangements increases dependency, and the inability to access social welfare benefits meant for them are some of the critical problems faced by the elderly in India.

Government Initiatives for Senior citizens through various programs:

- The Indian Constitution mandates the well-being of senior citizens under **Article 41**, which states: "The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and other cases of undeserved want."

	Initiated by	Objectives
Antodaya Anna Yojana (2000)	Department of Food and Public Distribution (Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution)	Provides food grains at a highly subsidized rate (2 per kg for wheat and 3 per kg for rice) to widows/terminally ill persons/ PwDs/persons aged 60 years and above.
Annapurna Scheme (2000/01)	Ministry of Rural Development	Persons aged 65 years and above who are not receiving pension under the National Old Age Pension Scheme get 10 kg of food grains per person per month, free of cost.
Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (2003; revived in 2014)	Ministry of Finance (Life Insurance Corporation of India)	pension to senior citizens through LIC of India. The scheme has a lock-in period of 15 years, and the senior citizen can benefit from a (taxable) interest rate of 9 percent per annum for 10 years. Investments are eligible for tax exemption under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act 1961.
Scheme for Financial Assistance for Veteran Artists (2014/2015)	Ministry of Culture	Earlier, it was known as the Artistes Pension Scheme and Welfare Fund (1961). Central government assistance of 6,000 as a monthly allowance is given to artists aged 60 years and above. In case of death, the spouse will receive lifetime benefits, and dependents will receive till marriage or employment or up to the age of 21, whichever is earlier. The financial assistance may be continued at the discretion of the central Government after examining the dependent's financial condition.
Atal Pension Yojana (2015)	Ministry of Finance (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority)	Help unorganized sector workers save money as they earn and provide guaranteed return post-retirement. Fixed pension for the subscribers ranging from 1,000 to 5,000, receivable at 60 years if s/he joins and contributes between 18 and 40 years.
Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (2015)		Government-backed accident insurance scheme. Available to people aged 18–70 with a bank account who consent to enable an auto-debit (₹12 per annum per member).
Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme (SCSS) 2019, amended in 2020	Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs)	Provide a regular income to those above 60 years of age. Tax benefits, safe investment, account transfer facility across the country, and a higher interest rate of 8.2 percent annually. Minimum deposit of ₹1,000 and a maximum of ₹3,000,000. Tenure-5 years, with premature withdrawal allowed under certain circumstances.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

PM VISHWAKARMA YOJANA

- Recognizing the crucial role of 'Vishwakarmas,' The Government launched the Rs 13,000 crore 'PM Vishwakarma Yojana' to enhance their work quality and accessibility.
 - This initiative equips craftspeople with technology, aiming to integrate them into domestic and global value chains while providing comprehensive support for skill enhancement in the modern market.
 - Through this, the Government intends to facilitate formal training, modernize traditional skills, offer financial assistance, and create avenues for market linkage, enabling these artisans to thrive in a rapidly changing economic landscape while preserving their invaluable crafts for future generations.

About the Scheme:

Government's initiatives for the artisans and handicrafts -

- Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (**USTTAD**),
- Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts,
- Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana, Mega Cluster Scheme,
- One District One Product,
- National Handicraft Development Programme,
- Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme,
- Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme.

Objectives:

- To enable the **recognition** of **artisans** and **craftspeople**, provide **skill upgradation** to hone their skills and give them a platform for **brand promotion** and **market linkages** to help them access new growth opportunities.
- Support for better and modern tools, easy access to collateral-free credit, incentives for digital transactions, platform for brand promotion and market linkages.

Key Features:

- It will be implemented as a **central sector scheme**, with an initial outlay of Rs **13,000 crore**. It will be initially implemented for **five years** up to 2027-28. **18 traditional trades** are included under it.
- It will be jointly implemented by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (**MoMSME**), the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (**MSDE**) and the Department of Financial Services (**DFS**), Ministry of Finance (MoF). MoMSME will be the nodal Ministry for the Scheme.
- A **three-tier implementation framework**, consisting of the National Steering Committee, State Monitoring Committee, and District Implementation Committee, has been provided for its implementation at the national, state, and district levels.

Eligibility:

- **Minimum age** of the beneficiary- **18 years** on the date of registration.
- Engaged in the trades concerned on the registration date and should **not** have **availed loans** under **similar credit-based schemes** of the Central Government or State Government.
- The registration and benefits under the Scheme shall be **restricted to one family member**.
- A person in government service and his/her family members shall **not** be eligible under the Scheme.

Registration:

- MoMSME will enroll the **beneficiary families** in association with **CSCs** (Common Service Centres). **The e-Shram database** will primarily identify potential beneficiaries falling in the trade categories covered under the Scheme.
- An **Aadhaar-authenticated** and centralized PM Vishwakarma **portal** and a PM Vishwakarma **mobile app** will act as facilitators to enable the Scheme's smooth operation.
- There will be a **three-tier verification** and **approval** process for the registration of beneficiaries, namely at village, district, and state levels.
 - **Skill India Digital:** Skill India Digital (SID) is an innovative digital platform centred around Skills and Jobs. It leverages the robust framework of India Stack Global, ensuring top-notch security and scalability.
 - This comprehensive platform offers various key features. Firstly, it facilitates DISCOVERY

& RECOMMENDATION through advanced AI/ML technology, aiding users in identifying suitable skill sets.

- Secondly, it hosts a digital job exchange, seamlessly connecting job seekers with relevant opportunities. Another pivotal aspect is its provision of digitally verifiable credentials, ensuring the authenticity of skill certifications.
- Moreover, Skill India Digital promotes convergence by integrating diverse government initiatives such as Skilling Schemes, eShram/EPFO/NCS, Education, Udyam, Aadhar, DigiLocker, GatiShakti, UMANG, AgriStack, PLI Schemes, ODOP, and High Economic Indicators like GSTN, EPFO Trends, Import/Export Trends.
- This convergence facilitates enhanced access to skilling, credit, and markets. The platform also introduces a Digital Skill Card for individuals, fostering lifelong learning opportunities that are accessible anytime, anywhere.

SKILL ACQUISITION AND KNOWLEDGE AWARENESS FOR LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION (SANKALP)

- The Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) programme was launched in January **2018** to lay emphasis on supporting structural reform and strengthening the overall systems governing, managing, and monitoring Skill Development, both at the national and state levels. The programme was also designed to support existing government efforts to scale up the delivery of short-term training. Three key Result Areas (RAs) were conceptualized under the programme, as given below:
 - **Result Area 1:** Institutional Strengthening at the National and State Levels for Planning, Delivering, and Monitoring High-quality Market-Related Training.
 - **Result Area 2** – Improved Quality and Market Relevance of Skill Development Programmes
 - **Result Area 3** - Improved Access to and Completion of Skills Training for Female Trainees and Other Disadvantaged Groups

THE AVSAR PROJECT

- To facilitate skill training and boost employment prospects for women in the apparel sector, the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** has partnered with **Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham** to launch the "AVSAR" project as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', which celebrates 75 years of progressive India and the glorious history of its people, culture, and achievements.
- The initiative will certify 4500 women from self-help groups (SHGs) and transgenders in vocational courses under the SANKALP programme.

MSME

BIZAMP

News Excerpt:

The Ministry of MSME has organized an outreach program called BizAmp at Dimapur Nagaland in collaboration with NSIC Venture Capital Fund Limited (NVCF) under the Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund.

About BizAmp:

- The first outreach program is for the northeast region of the country.
- Created to maximize capital gains through NVCF's SRI Fund.
- The program intends to support micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) in the Northeastern States and help them grow their companies by giving them access to SRI Fund benefits.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

E-SHRAM PORTAL

- e-Shram Portal Launched on 26.08.2021 to create a National database for unorganized workers.
- eShram won the "Gold Award" under the "**Public Digital Platforms – Central Ministries Departments**" category in the Digital India Award-2022.
- From January 2023 to November 2023, 69.26 lakh unorganized workers were registered on the

eShram portal. e-Shram portal has also been integrated with NCS, SID portal, PM-SYM, myScheme & DISHA portal.

NATIONAL CAREER SERVICE (NCS)

- National Career Service (NCS) Project is a **Mission-Mode Project** launched on 20.07.2015 to transform the National Employment Service into an online service that provides a variety of employment-related services, such as job matching, career counselling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses, apprenticeships, internships, etc., through a digital platform [www.ncs.gov.in].
 - As of November 30, 2023, the NCS platform had more than 3.64 crore registered Job Seekers, 19.15 Lakh employers, and more than 1.92 crore vacancies since its launch in 2015. The portal registered an unprecedented more than 13.49 lakh active vacancies during November 2023.
 - NCS portal is integrated with 28 States/UTs to develop a comprehensive pan-India network. In addition to states, NCS has also established integration with multiple private portals, such as monster.com, Freshersworld, HireMee, TCS-iON, Quikr, Ques Corp, etc., to post vacancies.
 - NCS is interlinked with the Skill India portal of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Udyam Portal (MSME), e-Shram, EPFO, ESIC, DigiLocker, etc., aimed to create ease for NCS stakeholders to get the maximum benefit from the NCS portal.
 - Ministry will soon launch an advanced version, namely NCS 2.0, to facilitate better job matching and search facility for jobseekers along with a recommendation engine for skilling by the use of the latest technologies and leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML). This will help job seekers get decent jobs based on their skills and help employers fulfil their requirements.

ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ROZGAR YOJANA (ABRY)

- To boost employment generation and to minimize the socio-economic compact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Labour & Employment on 30.12.2020 notified EPFO-linked Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY) scheme.

- As of December 05 2023, total benefits of Rs. 10,043.02 Crore have been given to 60.48 lakhs beneficiaries through 1,52,499 Establishments under ABRY.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

GREEN CREDIT PROGRAMME (GCP)

- Green Credit Initiative was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on the side-lines of COP 28.
- It is an initiative within the Government's Lifestyle for Environment or LIFE movement.
- The Green Credit Rules, 2023, was notified on October 12 2023 under the Environment Protection Act 1986.
 - These rules establish a mechanism to encourage voluntary environmental positive actions, resulting in the issuance of green credits. In its initial phase, voluntary tree plantation is envisaged on degraded land, wasteland, watershed areas, etc., under the control and management of Forest departments.
 - The generation of Green Credit under the Green Credit Rules, 2023, is independent of the carbon credit under the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, 2023. The governance structure of GCP includes steering committee members from concerned ministries/departments, experts, and institutions.
 - Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) is designated as the GCP administrator and is responsible for its implementation and management. The GCP digital process includes a dedicated web platform and GC registry to streamline operations.

MISSION LIFE

- At the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP26 2022), the Hon'ble PM announced Mission LiFE to bring individual behaviours to the forefront of the global climate action narrative.
 - LiFE has been acknowledged by various international foras, including IPCC Climate Change 2022, Mitigation of Climate Change Working Group III Report, 2022, Cover decision of Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, 2022,

G7 Communique adopted in Sapporo, Japan, 2023, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Communique, 2023., G20 Leaders' Declaration, 2023 and 9th G20 Parliamentary Speakers Summit (P20) and Parliamentary Forum, 2023.

INDIA COOLING ACTION PLAN

- India is the first country in the world to develop a comprehensive Cooling Action Plan.
- This plan seeks to provide an integrated vision for cooling across sectors, encompassing, inter alia, reducing cooling demand, refrigerant transition, enhancing energy efficiency, and better technology options with a 20-year time horizon.
 - During the **Hydro Chlorofluorocarbons Phase Out Management Plan (HPMP)** Stage-II implementation, India completely phased out the use of Hydro chlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)- 141b in manufacturing of rigid foam, the first among the developing countries to achieve the milestone.
 - As against the target of 35% reduction from the baseline as of 1.1.2020, India achieved a reduction of 44%, highlighting India's efforts in the protection of the stratospheric ozone layer.

MANGROVE INITIATIVE FOR SHORELINE HABITATS & TANGIBLE INCOMES (MISHTI)

- The Hon'ble Prime Minister launched the Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI) on World Environment Day (June 05, 2023).
 - The aim of the MISHTI is to "Restoration of mangrove forests" by undertaking mangrove reforestation/ afforestation measures along the coast of India by adopting existing best practices in India and globally.
 - The Ministry has prepared a proposal, and the same has been submitted to the National CAMPA authority for the allocation of funds under MISHTI for FY 2023-24. Rs.100 Crores have been allocated as Project outlay for FY 2023-24.

PARIVESH (PRO-ACTIVE RESPONSIVE FACILITATION BY INTERACTIVE AND VIRTUOUS ENVIRONMENTAL SINGLE WINDOW HUB)

- PARIVESH is a web-based, role-based workflow application developed for online submission and monitoring of proposals submitted by proponents seeking Environment, Forest, Wildlife, and CRZ Clearances from Central, State, and district-level authorities.
 - It automates the entire tracking of proposals, which includes online submission of a new proposal, editing/updating the details of proposals and displaying the status of the proposals at each stage of the workflow.
 - To enhance the users' experience on PARIVESH with modern-day web applications, the Ministry has expanded the scope of existing PARIVESH (2.0) leveraging emerging technology such as GIS, Advance Data Analytics, etc., for providing faster decisions on Green Clearances and robust compliance monitoring by end-to-end online appraisal and grant of clearances.
 - An upgraded version of the existing PARIVESH is supplemented with unique modules (Know Your Approval, Know Your Customer, Decision Support System, etc.).
 - Major modules in PARIVESH 2.0, viz., end-to-end online processing of Category A and B environmental clearance proposals, were developed and rolled out at the Central and SEIAA levels, respectively.
 - In addition, all major functionalities of other major clearances (FC/WL&CRZ) have been developed and rolled out. In CRZ clearance, all nine State Coastal Zonal Management Authorities were onboarded, for the first time, on PARIVESH 2.0 for online application submission and processing.

WILDLIFE

TRANSCONTINENTAL RELOCATION OF CHEETAH

- 8 cheetahs from Namibia and 12 cheetahs from South Africa were translocated to Kuno National Park in Sept'22 and Feb 2023, respectively. Cheetah

had become extinct in the country in the late 1940/early 1950s.

50 YEARS OF PROJECT TIGER

- According to the latest Tiger Census report released in August 2023, India is home to more than 75% of the world's tiger population. The Tiger Estimation (2022) shows an increase from 2226 in 2014 to 3,682 in 2023, with 12 tiger reserves in the Outstanding category. The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on April 09, 2023, to conserve global big cats, including tigers.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE

PM-AASHA

About PM-AASHA

The Central Government asserts ample pulse stocks under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) for market intervention.

- It is considering restructuring PSS and Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) to improve inventory and procurement management and effectively control market prices.
- The **PSS** became part of the broader **PM-ASHAA scheme** in September 2018.
- Under the **revised PSS**, the Central Government's overall **procurement** quantity is **restricted to 25% of the commodity's actual production** for that particular season.
- Both PSS and PSF cater to farmers' need to get a remunerative price and shield consumers from excessive speculation.
- A move has been initiated to bring PSF back into the agriculture ministry.
- The **Standing Committee of Parliament** recently recommended bringing the **PSF and PSS under one roof**.

Price Stabilization Fund (PSF):

- The Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) was set up in 2014-15 under the **Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW)**.
- The PSF scheme was transferred from DAC&FW to the **Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA)** w.e.f. April 01, 2016.
- **Objectives:**

- To promote direct purchase from farmers /farmers' association at farm gate/Mandi.
- To maintain a strategic buffer stock that would discourage hoarding and unscrupulous speculation.
- To protect consumers by supplying such commodities at reasonable prices through calibrated stock release.

Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA):

- The PM-AASHA is a transformative agricultural scheme introduced in **2018** under the aegis of the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** in India.
- This was launched to **secure equitable and remunerative prices** for the nation's hardworking farmers.
- **It aims** to enhance agricultural productivity and reduce the cost of cultivation, boosting and securing farmers' income in the long run.
- PM-AASHA is a beacon of hope designed to alleviate the economic challenges faced by those who toil tirelessly to feed the nation.

Components of PM-AASHA:

- The three components outlined under the Scheme are the Price Support Scheme (PSS), the Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS), and the Pilot of the Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme (PPSS).
- PSS, PDPS, and Pilot PPSS are implemented by the **Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare**.

PM-KISAN BHAI (BHANDARAN INCENTIVE) SCHEME

About the Scheme:

- **Objective:** To help small and marginal farmers who cannot hold their produce in warehouses and wait for better prices.
- This is considered an attempt to **disrupt traders' monopoly on determining crop prices**.
 - It is expected to **empower farmers by allowing them to keep their crops for at least three months after harvest**.
- This initiative grants farmers the autonomy to sell when they want, as opposed to the current system, in which most crops are sold during the harvesting

season, which usually lasts 2-3 months, with dealers and stockists controlling supplies throughout the off-season.

Pilot launch:

- In the **first phase**, the Scheme may be implemented on a pilot basis in **Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh**, with an estimated expenditure of **₹170 crore in three years**, including the current fiscal year.
- There appears to be a strong need for incentivizing the storing of farmers' produce in scientifically built warehouses and further reducing the interest rate on pledge finance availed against a secured instrument of **e-negotiable Warehouse Receipts (eNWRs) through Prompt Repayment Incentive (PRI)** on trading such eNWR via **e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** platform or other registered e-trading platforms interoperable with e-NAM.

Major components:

There are two components of the proposal —

- **Warehousing Rental Subsidy (WRS):**
 - Small and marginal farmers and farmer producer organizations (FPOs) will be eligible to avail of **WRS benefit at ₹4 per quintal per month** irrespective of the warehousing (storage) rental charges and whether charged per quintal basis or area basis by the warehouse operator.
 - The Government has proposed that the storage incentive be provided for a maximum of three months.
 - Besides, **the produce stored for 15 days or less will not be eligible for the subsidy.**
 - The storage incentive will be calculated **on a day-to-day basis.**
- **Prompt Repayment Incentive (PRI):**
 - The Government **proposes to extend the 3 percent additional interest subvention under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme** so that farmers can pledge their produce and get a loan at a subsidized interest rate.
 - All KCC-holder farmers will be eligible for **prompt repayment incentive at a 3 percent lesser interest rate for three months** on stocking their produce with registered warehouses, availing digital finance against eNWR and trading via eNAM.

- Once farmers get the desired monetary support for storage during harvesting season, they can refuse the buyer-dictated prices.
- By promoting e-NWR trade through the online portal e-NAM, farmers will gain access to many buyers across the country and be able to sell their produce, even if it is in a warehouse, using e-NWR on an online platform.

Sagar Parikrama

About

- Sagar Parikrama, **Phase-IX** was recently launched by the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying ((FAH&D) in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.
- The first phase of 'Sagar Parikrama' started on March 05, 2022 from **Mandvi to Porbandar (Gujarat)**.
- Sagar Parikrama is an outreach program intended to reach out to fishermen's communities across the entire coastal belt of the country.
- It aims to resolve the issues of the fishers and other stakeholders and to facilitate their economic upliftment.
- **The main objectives of 'Sagar Parikrama' are:**
 - Disseminate information on various fisheries-related schemes and programs being implemented by the Government, such as the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), 'Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund', and the Kisan Credit Card (KCC).
 - Promoting responsible fisheries with a focus on sustainable balance and protection of marine ecosystems.
 - Facilitate interaction and demonstrate solidarity with all fisher folk, fish farmers, coastal communities, and concerned stakeholders in the spirit of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
 - Promote responsible fisheries, focusing on the sustainable balance between utilizing marine fisheries resources for the nation's food security, the livelihoods of coastal fisher communities, and the protection of marine ecosystems.

DATA IN CLIMATE RESILIENT AGRICULTURE (DICRA) PLATFORM

News Excerpt:

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to co-create data-driven Digital Public Good, which includes DiCRA.

About DiCRA:

- It is a collaborative Digital Public Good providing open access to key geospatial datasets pertinent to **climate-resilient agriculture**.
- It provides intelligence on **climate resilience for 50 million hectares** of farmland across India.
- It is guided by the Digital Public Good principles of open access, open software, open code, and open APIs.
- It uses cutting-edge **data science and machine learning** to identify climate change-resilient farms and those highly vulnerable.

Advantages:

- With UNDP's technical support, NABARD will host and maintain the DiCRA platform and use its key geospatial datasets for policymaking, research, and development activities.
- This 5-year technical collaboration is envisaged to foster collective climate action and create innovative platforms and new product offerings to enhance rural economic empowerment.
- Such open data innovations can highlight best practices, optimize agriculture investments and shelter populations from risk.

UNIFIED PORTAL FOR AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (UPAg)

News Excerpt:

Recently, NITI Aayog members launched the Unified Portal for Agricultural Statistics (U[Ag]) developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (DA&FW).

About UPAg:

- This innovative platform **streamlines and enhances data management** in the agricultural domain.
- It is a crucial component of the **Digital Public Infrastructure for Agriculture** and aligns with the principles of e-governance.
- It aims to provide real-time, standardized, and verified data on agricultural commodities,

facilitating data-driven decision-making for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders.

Key Features:

- **Data Standardization** will make data accessible in one location, eliminating the need to compile data from multiple sources.
- **Advanced Data Analytics**- It will offer insights such as production trends, trade correlations, and consumption patterns, aiding policymakers in making informed decisions.
- **Granular Production Estimates**- These will enhance the Government's ability to respond to agricultural crises swiftly.
- **Commodity Profile Reports using algorithms**- This will minimize subjectivity and provide users with comprehensive insights.
- **Plug and Play**: Users can use the portal's data to prepare their reports, promoting data-driven decision-making.

MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

PM GARIB KALAYAN ANNA YOJANA

About Yojana

PM announced the extension of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PM-GKAY) for over five years till 2028.

- By 2028, the Government expects India to become the world's third-largest economy, with a GDP of \$5 trillion.
- The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY) was launched in **March 2020**.
- The **Department of Food and Public Distribution operates the program under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution**.
- PM-GKAY provides **5 kg of rice or wheat per person and 1 kg of dal** to each family holding a ration card.
- In 2020, the Government of India announced the PM-GKAY for all beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) as part of the **pro-poor PM Garib Kalyan Package** for the period April–November 2020.

- **Around 80 crore NFSA beneficiaries were allocated an additional 5 kg of foodgrains (wheat or rice) free of charge** for a period of 8 months (April–November 2020), thereby ensuring the food security of poor, vulnerable beneficiaries and households in the wake of economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak in the country.
- The Scheme has been extended multiple times. Though it was initially meant for only three months, the Government extended the Scheme six times to provide the additional free foodgrain for 28 months.
- In December last year, the Government announced the amalgamation of the PMGKAY scheme with the NFSA, making the earlier highly subsidized foodgrain completely free for the poor.

MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING

PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN SAMPADA YOJANA (PMKSY)

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY) is an umbrella scheme initiated by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) to enhance the infrastructure and efficiency of food processing in India.
 - Originally approved as the Central Sector Scheme - SAMPADA in May 2017, it was later renamed PMKSY on August 23, 2017, aligning its duration with the 14th Finance Commission cycle from 2016 to 2020.
 - The rationale behind PMKSY is to modernize infrastructure and streamline the supply chain management process from farm to retail outlet. By doing so, the Scheme aims to boost the growth of the food processing sector, improve returns for farmers, contribute to the goal of doubling farmers' income, generate employment opportunities in rural areas, reduce agricultural produce wastage, increase processing levels, and enhance the export of processed foods.
 - The objectives of PMKSY include: Creation of modern infrastructure for food processing, such as mega food parks, clusters, and individual processing units. Establishing effective backward and forward linkages, connecting farmers, processors, and markets to ensure a seamless

flow of goods. Developing robust supply chain infrastructure for perishable goods, thereby reducing post-harvest losses and ensuring better market access for farmers.

- The financial allocation for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) underwent a change from the 14th Finance Commission to the 15th Finance Commission. Initially set at ₹6,000 crores during the 14th Finance Commission cycle, it was reduced to ₹4,600 crores for the 15th Finance Commission cycle. The Scheme will continue until March 31, 2026, or until further review, with an allocation of ₹4,600 crores.

PRADHAN MANTRI MICRO FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES UPGRADATION SCHEME (PMFME)

- Under Atmanirbhar Abhiyaan, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme named Pradhan Mantri Micro Food Processing Industries in June, 2020 to encourage 'Vocal for Local' in the sector with a total outlay of Rs 10,000 crore in the period of 2020-2025 for this Scheme. This is the first-ever Government scheme for Micro Food Processing enterprises. It is targeted to benefit 2 lakh enterprises through credit-linked subsidy and adopt the approach of One District One Product.

PRODUCTION-LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (PLISFPI)

- To support the creation of global food manufacturing champions commensurate with India's natural resource endowment and support Indian brands of food products in international markets, **the Central Sector Scheme—"Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI)"**—was approved by the Union Cabinet on 31.03.2021 with an outlay of Rs. 10,900 crores. The Scheme is being implemented over a **six-year period from 2021-22 to 2026-27**.
 - The components of the Scheme are: Incentivizing the manufacturing of four major food product segments viz. Ready to Cook/ Ready to Eat (RTC/ RTE) foods, including millets-based products, Processed Fruits and

vegetables, Marine Products, and Mozzarella Cheese (Category-I).

- The second component relates to the production of Innovative/ Organic products for SMEs (Category-II).
- The third component relates to support for Branding and marketing abroad (Category-III) to incentivize the emergence of strong Indian brands for in-store Branding, shelf space renting and marketing.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

DATA GAP INITIATIVE

- In 2009, the **G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors** endorsed the 'Data Gap Initiative' (DGI) to address the gap in data revealed by the 2007-08 Global financial crisis.
- The crisis underscored the importance of reliable, timely and internationally comparable Government Finance Statistics (GFS) data on the general Government for early detection of sources of vulnerability and taking timely corrective measures.
- The Controller General of Accounts (CGA) plugged the gap in India's Statistical System by **transitioning from 'RED' to 'AMBER' label**, showcasing the Ministry of Finance, Government of India's commitment to sharing reliable, timely and internationally comparable data as per DGI Recommendation.
- The data was presented in conformity with the **definitions of the Government Finance Statistics Manual, 2014 (GFSM 2014)** by the CGA in coordination with the Department of Expenditure and Department of Economic Affairs, MoF, as well as **IMF-SARTTAC** (South Asia Regional Training and Technical Assistance Centre) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

MINISTRY OF HOUSING & URBAN AFFAIRS

AAINA DASHBOARD FOR CITIES' PORTAL

About

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) recently made the '**AAINA Dashboard for Cities**' portal live.
- The portal, **www.aaina.gov.in**, serves as the nationwide platform for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to voluntarily submit critical data regularly.
- ULBs submit data, including audited accounts and self-reported performance metrics, through an easy-to-fill data entry form on the portal.
- Envisioned as a permanent platform, the AAINA Dashboard aims to create a **robust database of key performance metrics for ULBs** that is updated regularly.

Objective

<p>Information</p> <p>Dashboards on status and progress of the ULBs on 5 thematic or MOS</p>	<p>Healthy Competition</p> <p>ULB can now see how their ULB is foring vis-a-vis other ULBs</p>
<p>Inspiration</p> <p>Motivation for ULBs to idently the possibilities available for improvement</p>	<p>Learning</p> <p>Opportunity for ULBs to learn and implement best practices from peers</p>

Information Collection on Five Thematic Areas



- Handholding support is provided to ULBs by MoHUA through **Digital India Corporation** as needed.
- While not ranking the ULBs, the AAINA dashboard would serve as a **tool for comparing similarly placed cities and promoting peer learning among cities.**

About ULBs:

- They are small local bodies that govern a city or a town of a specified population. There are several types of ULBs in India, such as Municipal Corporation, Municipality, Notified Area Committee, Town Area Committees, Special Purpose Agency, Township, Port Trust, Cantonment Board, etc.
- The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 sought to empower ULBs to perform functions and implement schemes in relation to the 18 subjects specified in the 12th Schedule of the Constitution.

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAY

BHARATMALA PARIYOJANA

- The Bharatmala Pariyojana was launched with the primary focus on optimizing the efficiency of the movement of goods and people across the country. Phase I of the Bharatmala Pariyojana, approved in October 2017, focuses on bridging critical infrastructure gaps through the development of 34,800 km of National Highways. The Pariyojana emphasized a "**corridor-based National Highway development**" to ensure infrastructure symmetry and consistent road user experience. The key components of the Pariyojana are Economic Corridors development, Inter-corridor and feeder routes development, National Corridors Efficiency Improvement, Border, and International Connectivity Roads, Coastal and Port Connectivity Roads and Expressways.
 - **Status of Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase 1:** The status of Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase 1 entails a total length of 34,800 km in 31 States and UTs and 550+ Districts. The length awarded is 27,384 km, and the length constructed is 15,045 km. Phase 1 is to be completed by 2027-28.

MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS:

NATIONAL E-VIDHAN APPLICATION (NeVA)

- The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is the 'Nodal Ministry' for implementation of NeVA MMP in all the States/ UTs with Legislatures and has been empowered to take all necessary steps to promote & roll out e-Vidhan re-designated as **National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA)** in all the 31 States/ UTs with Legislatures.
- The NeVA project has achieved notable milestones in its remarkable journey. Presently, 22 Legislatures have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry. Out of these, 18 have received project sanction and funding.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

PM SHRI

News Excerpt:

The cabinet approved a new centrally sponsored scheme, PM SHRI Schools (**PM Schools for Rising India**), to redevelop more than 14,500 schools across the country as PM SHRI Schools.

About:

- It was implemented by strengthening select existing schools managed by Central, State, or UT Governments or local bodies to reflect the key features of the new National Education Policy, 2020.
- It will act as an exemplary school and offer mentorship to other schools in its vicinity. It will be developed as green schools, incorporating environment-friendly aspects like solar panels and LED lights, nutrition gardens, plastic-free, water conservation, etc.
- The schools will be upgraded with labs, libraries, and art rooms. Pedagogy adopted will be more experiential, holistic, integrated, play/toy-based (foundational years) inquiry-driven, and discovery-oriented with a focus on learning outcomes.
- Linkage with sector skill councils and local industry to enhance employability. It aims to provide high-quality education in an equitable, inclusive, and joyful school environment.

- **Selection of schools through Challenge Mode-** Schools would be required to self-apply on the online portal.
- **Funding:** 60:40—by Centre and state. The Centre's funding is up to 90% for hilly states, the northeast, Jammu, and Kashmir.

MALAVIYA MISSION- TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME

About program

- It aims to provide **tailored training programmes** for the **capacity building** of **faculty** members in higher educational institutions (**HEIs**).
- UGC intends to **train 15 lakh teachers** over the **next 2 years** through **111 Malaviya Mission centres** across India.
- The Human Resource Development Centres (**HRDCs**) have been **renamed** as **Madan Mohan Malaviya Teachers' Training Centre**.

Other initiatives of UGC to train teachers

UGC will train more than 1000 university teachers to teach relevant courses on **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)** from the degree level.

- The University Grants Commission (**UGC**) plans to start **two credit courses** giving an overview of **Indian culture** and **traditions** in the **first years** of both the **UG** and **PG programmes** across the country.
- **Main areas:** **Parampara** (tradition), **Drishti** (perspective), and **Loukik Prayojan** (modern relevance) of ancient IKS.
- It is **part** of the **Malaviya Mission** and aligns with the National Education Policy 2020.
- Conducted in **six cities** — Nagpur, Chennai, Varanasi, Srinagar, Guwahati, and Delhi
- The **six-day training** is divided into **four parts** –
 - **Overview** of the subject, including an introduction to **pre-14th century Vedic texts**.
 - Philosophical foundations of IKS include the **Darshana Shastra** (Vedic Philosophy).
 - **Vocabulary lessons** contain words that cannot be translated, such as karma and dharma.
 - Methods of teaching IKS include **Tantra Yukti**, a **research methodology**, and innovative **pedagogy**.

MINISTRY OF PORTS & SHIPPING

SAGAR MANTHAN – COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING DASHBOARD

- On March 23, 2023, the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways launched 'Sagar Manthan', a digital platform containing comprehensive data related to the Ministry and all its organizations. The Real-time Performance Monitoring Dashboard facilitates the monitoring of projects, KPIs, Maritime India Vision 2030, and financial and operational parameters.

'SAGAR-SETU' MOBILE APP – NATIONAL LOGISTICS PORTAL (MARINE)

- SAGAR-SETU, a mobile app launched by the national Logistics Portal (Marine) on March 31, 2023, aims to improve the Ease of Doing Business further. It facilitates real-time port operations and monitoring and provides handled services to the port fraternity for accessing vessel, cargo, container, finance, and regulatory authority data and services, thereby improving the customer experience.

LAUNCH OF 'HARIT SAGAR' - THE GREEN PORT GUIDELINES 2023

- To meet the larger vision of achieving the Zero Carbon Emission Goal, launched 'Harit Sagar' the Green Port Guidelines on 10.05.2023. Four major ports, namely, Deendayal Port, Visakhapatnam Port, New Mangalore Port and VOC Port, are already generating renewable energy more than their demand

MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE

PRADHAN MANTRI TB MukT Bharat Abhiyaan

- Pradhan Mantri TB MukT Bharat Abhiyaan was launched by the Honorable President of India on September 09, 2022, with the objectives to provide additional support to TB patients in order to

improve treatment outcomes, augment community involvement and leverage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) op conducted, and 49.56 lakh high-risk pregnancies have been identified under PMSMA across States/ UTs as of December 15, 2023.

LAQSHYA

- It aims to improve the Quality of care in Labour Rooms and Maternity Operation Theatres to ensure that pregnant women receive respectful and quality care during delivery and immediate postpartum. As of November 30, 2023, 873 Labour Rooms and 663 Maternity Operation Theatres are LaQshya certified at the national level. During FY2022-23, 185 Labour Rooms and 129 Maternity Operation Theatres are LaQshya certified at the national level.

JANANI SURAKSHA YOJANA (JSY)

- JSY is a safe motherhood intervention under the National Health Mission (NRHM). Launched with the objective of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality, the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) promotes institutional delivery among pregnant women, especially those with weak socio-economic status, i.e. women from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and BPL households.

MUSQAN - QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE OF CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

- The Hon'ble Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare launched the "MusQan" initiative on September 17 2021 to ensure child-friendly services in Public Health facilities on the occasion of World Patient Safety Day. The initiative will focus on improving the quality parameters to ensure the safety and availability of infrastructure, equipment, supplies, skilled human resources, clinical protocols, evidence-based practices, etc., at public health facilities. As of November 2023, a total of 58 facilities got national-level certification under MusQan.

SOCIAL AWARENESS AND ACTIONS TO NEUTRALIZE PNEUMONIA SUCCESSFULLY (SAANS)

- SAANS Campaign has been rolled out in the States/ UTs from November 12, 2023 – February 29, 2024,

with the aim to accelerate the action against Childhood Pneumonia by generating awareness around protection, prevention and treatment aspects of Childhood Pneumonia and enhancing early identification and care-seeking behaviours among parents and caregivers. Additionally, awareness generation, promotion and administration of the Pneumococcal Vaccine (PCV) have also been included in the SAANS campaign for the year 2021.

MERA ASPATAAL

- The Government has launched the "Mera Aspataal/My Hospital" initiative to empower patients by seeking their views on the Quality of experience in a public healthcare facility. Mera Aspataal/My Hospital is a simple and multi-lingual application that captures patient feedback on the services received from public hospitals in a very short time. It works through multiple communication channels, including Short Message Service (SMS), Outbound Dialling (OBD), a mobile application, and a web portal. The application allows feedback to be consolidated, analyzed, and disseminated on a frequently updated dashboard. Analyzed data is used to improve the Quality of services in healthcare facilities. Thus, Mera Aspataal allows patients to connect with healthcare providers and policymakers and to have their opinions heard and acted upon.

KAYAKALP

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MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

ATAL VAYO ABHYUDAY YOJANA (AVYAY)

- The Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY), introduced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, is a comprehensive initiative aimed at empowering senior citizens in India.
- This Scheme recognizes the invaluable contribution made by the elderly to society and seeks to ensure their well-being and social inclusion. By recognizing the invaluable contributions of the elderly to society, the Government aims to empower and uplift them, ensuring their active participation and inclusion in all aspects of life.
 - The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, being the Nodal Department for welfare of senior citizens, is implementing various programs and schemes. **National Action Plan for Senior Citizens (NAPSrc) had been revamped, renamed as Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY)**, and subsumed in April 2021.
 - Under the umbrella Scheme, AVYAY, an **Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrc)**, provides financial assistance to eligible organizations for running and maintaining Senior Citizen Homes/ Continuous Care Homes. The aim is to improve the Quality of life of senior citizens, especially indigent senior citizens, by providing basic amenities, entertainment opportunities, and encouraging productive and active ageing.
 - The Achievements under IPSrC through various activities are that presently, a total of 552 Senior Citizen Homes, 14 Continuous care homes, 19 mobile Medicare units and 5 physiotherapy clinics are being assisted and maintained by different NGOs across the country. Nearly 1.5 lakh beneficiaries are staying in the Senior Citizen homes. 361 districts across the country have been covered. During the last 3 financial years, a total of Rs. 288.08 crore grants in aid were released, and the number of beneficiaries is 363570.
 - **Another component under the AVYAY Scheme is Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)**, to provide eligible senior citizens suffering from any age-related disability/ infirmity with assisted living devices that can restore near normalcy in their bodily functions, overcoming the disability/

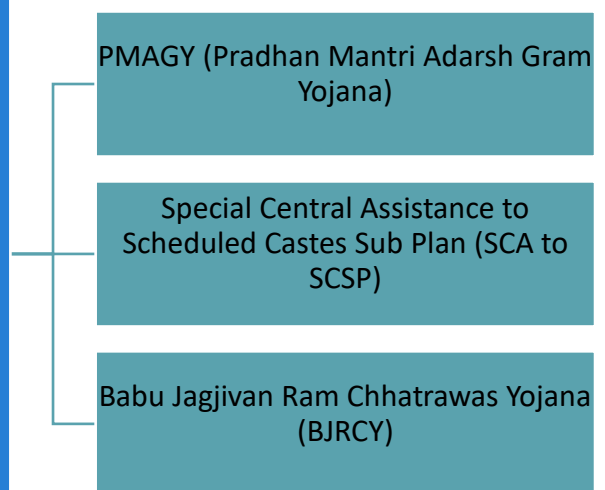
infirmity manifested such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and loco-motor disabilities. Financial criteria for beneficiaries are either the Senior Citizen belongs to the 'Below Poverty Line' (BPL) category or he/ she has income up to Rs. 15,000 (Rupees Fifteen Thousand) per month.

PRADHAN MANTRI ANUSUCHIT JAATI ABHYUDAY YOJANA (PM-AJAY)

About PM AJAY:

- **The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** recently launched the PM-AJAY scheme by merging **three centrally sponsored schemes**.

PM AJAY (Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana)



- The Scheme **aims to reduce poverty** among SC communities by providing additional employment opportunities, **improving socio-economic developmental indicators** by ensuring adequate infrastructure, etc., in SC-dominated villages and **increasing literacy**.
- It has the following **components**:
 - Development of SC-dominated villages into an **"Adarsh Gram"**.
 - **"Grants-in-aid"** for District/State-level Projects for the socio-economic betterment of SCs - construction of schools, livelihood projects, etc.
 - Construction of **hostels** in higher educational institutions and schools.
 - Financial support is needed to monitor and evaluate the Scheme's implementation.

MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

PM MITRA

- The Government has launched the PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks Scheme to develop world-class infrastructure, including plug-and-play facilities, with an outlay of Rs. 4445 crores for a period up to 2027-28. PM MITRA Parks Scheme is inspired by the 5F vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister - Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign. Nearly Rs. 70,000 crore investment and 20 lakhs employment generation is envisaged. Parks will offer an opportunity to create an integrated textiles value chain, from spinning, weaving, processing/dyeing, and printing to garment manufacturing, at a single location. World-class industrial infrastructure would attract cutting-edge technology and boost FDI and local investment in the sector. Centre and States will form SPVs to set up PM MITRA Parks. These parks will be developed in PPP mode.

KASTURI COTTON BHARAT

- Kasturi Cotton Bharat programme of the Ministry of Textiles is a first-of-its-kind Branding, traceability, and certification exercise carried out jointly by the Government of India, Trade Bodies, and Industry to promote Indian Cotton.
 - Stakeholders across the supply chain, including farmers, Ginning Units, Spinning Mills, Processing Houses, Weaving Units, Garmenting Units, Home Textile manufacturers, and even Retailers and Brands, will be involved in a collaborative effort to promote and enhance the value of Indian Cotton in the domestic and overseas markets.
 - To encourage the Trade and Industry to work on the principle of self-regulation by owning complete responsibility for the Traceability, Certification and Branding of Kasturi Cotton Bharat, an MoU has been signed between CCI on behalf of Govt. of India, the Ministry of Textiles and TEXPROCIL.
 - The Ministry of Textiles is driving this initiative with a mission-oriented approach, allocating budgetary support in alignment with Rs.15 crores in contribution from Trade & Industry Bodies.

Spanning three years from 2022-23 to 2024-25, this collaborative effort anticipates a positive impact on the entire Indian Textile Industry, fostering an elevated global perception and value for Indian Cotton.

SAMARTH

- The Government with a view to enhance the skills of the workforce in the textile sector has formulated Samarth Scheme under a broad skilling policy framework with the objective of providing opportunity for sustainable livelihood.
 - The implementation period of the Scheme is upto March 2024. The Scheme aims to provide demand-driven and placement-oriented National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) compliant skilling programmes to incentivize and supplement the efforts of the industry in creating jobs in the organized textile sector and related sectors, covering the entire value chain of textiles, excluding spinning & weaving and in addition, it also provides skilling and skill-upgradation in the traditional textile sectors.
 - The skilling programme under the Scheme is implemented through Implementing Partners (IPs) comprising Textile Industry/Industry Associations, State Government agencies and Sectoral Organizations of the Ministry of Textiles. Under the Scheme 2,47,465 persons have been trained as on 11.12.2023.

MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

SVAMITVA (SURVEY OF VILLAGES AND MAPPING WITH IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY IN VILLAGE AREAS)

- SVAMITVA Scheme was launched by the Prime Minister on National Panchayati Raj Day, April 24, 2020, with a resolve to enable the economic progress of Rural India by providing a "Record of Rights" to every rural household owner.
- The Scheme aims to demarcate inhabited (Abadi) land in rural areas through the latest surveying drone technology, which is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Revenue

Departments, State Panchayati Raj Departments and Survey of India.

- The Scheme covers multifarious aspects, viz. facilitating monetization of properties and enabling bank loans; reducing property-related disputes; comprehensive village-level planning, assuring the rural local Government a good source of revenue would be the stepping-stone towards achieving Gram Swaraj in true sense and making rural India Atmanirbhar.
- The duration of implementation of the Scheme is 2020-21 to 2024-25.

GRAM URJA SWARAJ ABHIYAAN

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has collaborated with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy to include the Gram Panchayats under all its schemes, focusing on the adoption of renewable energy.
 - This will enable that in the upcoming years, Gram Panchayats would evolve as self-sufficient in terms of energy and become producers of energy instead of only being consumers.
 - Moreover, the widespread adoption of renewable energy applications in rural areas would enable the Gram Panchayats to develop their Own Sources of Revenue (OSR) and employment opportunities for the local youth of the villages.
 - Under the Gram Urja Swaraj Abhiyaan, GPs have developed their own implementation models with the support of Renewable energy development Agencies of the states.

MINISTRY OF AYUSH

SMART PROGRAM

- The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), for regulating medical education and conducting scientific research, respectively, have launched '**SMART**' (**Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals**) program aimed to boost scientific research in priority healthcare research areas through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals.

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

GAJRAJ

About Gajraj

- Indian Railways develops 'Gajraj' AI software using optical fibre cable (OFC) to **prevent train-elephant collisions** in multiple states.
- The software triggers alerts within **200 meters**, detecting suspicious movements near railway tracks using AI and OFC.
- 'Gajraj' distinguishes between elephants, other animals, and humans by identifying variations in optical signals.
- Alerts are sent to **locomotive pilots**, control room personnel, and section station masters upon detecting movement.
- There is a critical need for the initiative, as **45 elephant fatalities** in train accidents in the past three years.
- The software, successfully tested in **Assam**, is set to be deployed across 700 km of elephant corridors in **multiple states** within the next eight months.

PROJECT SMART

Project-SMART envisages to develop surrounding areas of Mumbai - Ahmedabad High Speed Railway (MAHSR) Stations to enhance accessibility and convenience of commuters & other stakeholders and to promote economic activities in the vicinity of station areas.

- The project would facilitate and enhance the institutional capacity of State Governments, Municipal Corporations and Urban Development Authorities to plan, develop and manage surrounding areas of MAHSR stations.

DONER

PM-DevINE

- Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE), was announced as a new Central Sector scheme, with 100% Central funding, in the Union Budget 2022-23 and was approved by the Union Cabinet on October 12, 2022, with a total outlay of ₹6,600 crore for the 4-year period from 2022-23 to 2025-26 (remaining years of the 15th Finance Commission period).
- The objectives of the PM-DevINE scheme are to:

- (i) fund infrastructure convergently, in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti;
- (ii) support social development projects based on the felt needs of the NER;
- (iii) enable livelihood activities for youth and women; and
- (iv) fill the development gaps in various sectors.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

PROJECT UDBHAV

About Project Udbhav:

- It is an initiative by the **Indian Army** in collaboration with the **United Service Institution of India (USI)**, a defence think-tank.
- It aims to integrate India's age-old wisdom in statecraft, strategy, diplomacy, and warfare with modern military pedagogy.
- It seeks to bridge the gap between historical and contemporary thematic studies of military warfare.
- It will look into the integration of India's "ancient strategic acumen" into the contemporary military domain and develop an "indigenous strategic vocabulary", rooted in India's "philosophy and culture".
- It would focus on historical and regional texts and kingdoms, as well as thematic and Kautilya studies.
- Through this, the Army aims to nurture its future officers to apply ancient wisdom in modern scenarios and allow a more profound understanding of international relations and foreign cultures.

United Service Institution of India (USI):

- The USI is a defence think tank founded in 1870 by a soldier scholar, Colonel (later Major General) Sir Charles MacGregor.
- The story of its growth is the story of the growth of the Indian Armed Forces.
- It was founded to further interest and knowledge in the art, science and literature of the Defence Services.'
- It is headed by an Officer of Major General or of equivalent rank.

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS

MERA YUVA BHARAT

About

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of an autonomous body, Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), to serve as an overarching enabling mechanism powered by technology for youth development and youth-led development and provide equitable access to youth to actualize their aspirations and build Viksit Bharat across the entire spectrum of the Government.

● Key Features:

- It is an autonomous body set up by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
- It will benefit the youth in the age group of 15-29 years, in line with the definition of 'Youth' in the National Youth Policy.
- Regarding programme components specifically meant for adolescents, the beneficiaries will be in the age group of 10-19 years.
- It will help in Setting the focus of the Government on Youth-Led development and make the Youth "active drivers" of development and not merely "passive recipients".
- It will be launched on October 31, 2023, on National Unity Day.
- The primary objective is to make it a Government platform for youth development. Under the new arrangement, with access to resources & connection to opportunities, youth would become community change agents and nation builders allowing them to act as the Yuva Setu between the Government and the citizens.
- **The establishment of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) would lead to:**
 - Leadership Development in the Youth.
 - Better alignment between youth aspirations and community needs.
 - Create a centralized youth database.
 - Improved two-way communication to connect youth government initiatives and activities of other stakeholders that engage with youth.