

2020



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CURRENT AFFAIRS

POLITY AND NATION

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BusinessLine



1. Supreme Court Panel Recommends Several Prison Reforms

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court appointed Justice Amitava Roy (retd.) Committee has given recommendations to reform prisons.
- The Court appointed the Committee in 2018 to examine the various problems plaguing prisons, from overcrowding to lack of legal advice to convicts to issues of remission and parole.

Key Issues:

- **Overcrowding:** It is a common bane in the prisons which often results in human rights Violation.
- **Unhygienic Conditions:** The kitchens are congested and unhygienic and the diet has remained unchanged for years now.
- **Undertrial Prisoners:** Most prisons are filled with undertrial prisoners, whose numbers are highly disproportionate to those of convicts.
- **Lack of Human Resources:** The Prison Department has a perennial average of 30%-40% vacancies; unavailability of sufficient police guards for escort and transportation of prisoners led to the delay in trials.
- **Lack of Legal advice:** Undertrials do not get proper legal advice convicts to issues of remission and parole.

Key Recommendations:

- Use of video-conferencing for trial.
- Speedy trial to solve the unwarranted phenomenon of overcrowding.
- There should be at least one lawyer for every 30 prisoners.
- Arrangements of modern cooking facilities, canteens to buy essential items for prisoners should be made.
- Every new prisoner should be allowed a free phone call a day to his family members to see him through his first week in jail.
- The Supreme Court should pass directions asking authorities to start the recruitment process against permanent vacancies within three months and the process should be completed in a year.

2. Motion of Thanks

Why in News?

Recently a debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address was held in Lok Sabha.

Motion of Thanks

- Motion of Thanks is a motion in Indian Parliament which follows the address of the President of India to the joint sitting of Lok-Sabha and Rajya-Sabha at the commencement of the first session of a new Lok Sabha and first session of every year.

- The President's address is essentially a statement of the legislative and policy achievements of the government during the preceding year and gives a broad indication of the agenda for the year ahead.
- This address of the president is discussed in both the Houses of Parliament on a motion called the 'Motion of Thanks'.
- At the end of the discussion, the motion is put to vote.
- The President's Address and Motion of Thanks are governed by Articles 86 (1) and 87 (1) of the Constitution and Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.
- **Significance**
 1. It presents an occasion to the members of Parliament to raise discussions and debates to examine and criticise the government and administration for its lapses and failures.
 2. This motion must be passed in the House. Otherwise, it amounts to the defeat of the government.

3. Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institutes(SATHI)

Why in News?

The Department of Science & Technology (DST) , Ministry of Earth Sciences, has launched a unique scheme called Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institutes (SATHI)

About SATHI

- **Aim:**To address the need for building shared, professionally managed and strong Science and Technology infrastructure centres in the country which is readily accessible to academia, start-ups, manufacturing, industry and R&D labs.
- The DST has already set up 3 such centres in the country, one each at
 - IIT Kharagpur
 - IIT Delhi
 - BHU
- It is planned to set up 5 SATHI Centres every year for the next four years.
- These Centres have major analytical instruments and advanced manufacturing facilities to provide common services of high-end analytical testing, thus avoiding duplication and reduced dependency on foreign sources.
- These would be operated with a transparent, open access policy.
- This will also foster a strong culture of collaboration between institutions and across disciplines to take advantage of developments, innovations and expertise in diverse areas.

4. Launch of Portal Santusht

Why in News?

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has launched 'Santusht portal' to monitor the implementation of labour laws at the grassroots level.

Santusht Portal

- The objective of 'Santusht' is:
 - to promote transparency, accountability, effective delivery of public services
 - implementation of policies, schemes of Ministry of Labour and Employment at grassroot level through constant monitoring
- This is in line with the government's aim to implement labour reforms in all the four codes:
 - Wages
 - Industrial Relations
 - Social security
 - Occupational safety, health and working conditions

5. Mukti Caravan

Why in News?

Mukti Caravan is being run in the state of Rajasthan.

- Mukti (liberation) Caravan is a campaign on wheels that will go from village to village across India.
 - It was launched by Nobel peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi in 1997.
- Objective is to raise awareness about evils like child trafficking, child labour and child sexual abuse.
- Activists, government officials, theatre artists, National Legal Services Authority representatives, judiciary and other stakeholders are part of this campaign.
- Street plays, songs, wall art and small group meetings are some activities.
- Discussion will focus on solutions to these evils and laws which can stop them.
- Reason behind the program:
 - Child trafficking is rampant in India.
 - 60% of the victims of human trafficking are children.

National Legal Services Authority

- The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 which came into force on 9th November, 1995 to establish a nationwide uniform network for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society.
- The Chief Justice of India is the Patron-in-Chief and the second senior

most Judge of the Supreme Court of India is the Executive Chairman of the Authority.

6. PMMVY Awards

Why in News?

States, Union Territories and districts have been awarded Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) awards by the Union Minister of Women & Child Development and Textiles.

Key Points

- **Best Performance category**
 - States/ UTs having a population of more than 1 crore:
 1. Madhya Pradesh
 2. Andhra Pradesh
 3. Haryana
 - States/ UTs having a population of less than 1 crore:
 1. Dadra & Nagar Haveli
 2. Himachal Pradesh
 3. Chandigarh
- **Matru Vandana Saptah (MVS)**
 - Matru Vandana Saptah (MVS) was held from 2nd to 8th December 2019.
 - The objective of observing MVS was to increase the implementation of the Scheme and create a healthy competition amongst States/ UTs.
 - The theme of the Saptah was “towards building a healthy nation – Surakshit Janani, ViksitDharini”.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a maternity benefit program.
- It is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- It is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for the first live birth

7. World Cancer Day

Why in News?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and its specialized International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have released two reports on the occasion of World Cancer Day.

- World Cancer Day is observed on the 4th of February every year by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

- The aim is to create awareness about cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.
- The theme for 2020 is 'I Am and I Will'.

Highlights of the Reports

- **Global Scenario:**

- The overall cancer cases in the world would rise by 60% by 2040 and tobacco use is responsible for 25% of cancer deaths in the world.
- Less than 15% of low- and middle-income countries offer comprehensive cancer treatment services through their public health systems, compared to higher-income countries.
- a) Better cancer treatment in high-income countries has resulted in a 20% drop in mortality between 2000 and 2015 whereas only 5% drop is observed in the case of low and middle-income countries.

- **Indian Scenario:**

- 1 in 10 Indians will develop cancer during their lifetime, and 1 in 15 Indians will die of cancer.
- There are an estimated 1.16 million new cancer cases, 7,84,800 cancer deaths in India.
- The following 6 most common cancer types account for 49% of all new cancer cases in India:
 - a) Breast cancer
 - b) Oral cancer
 - c) Cervical cancer
 - d) Lung cancer
 - e) Stomach cancer
 - f) Colorectal cancer
- Tobacco-related cancers account for 34-69% of all cancers in men and constitute 10-27% of all cancers in women in most regions in India.

7. Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices

Why in News?

The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), which comes under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, has requested companies to abide by the Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP).

- It comes in the wake of several instances of breach of UCPMP by pharma companies.

Key Features:

- The UCPMP Code is applicable on Pharmaceutical Companies, Medical Representatives, Agents of Pharmaceutical Companies such as Distributors, Wholesalers, Retailers, and Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations.

- No gifts, pecuniary advantages or benefits in kind may be supplied, offered or promised to persons qualified to prescribe or supply drugs, by a pharmaceutical company or any of its agents i.e. distributors, wholesalers, retailers, etc.
- Gifts for the personal benefit of healthcare professionals and family members, both immediate and extended, such as tickets to entertainment events, are also not to be offered or provided.
- The Code also provides that free samples of drugs shall not be supplied to any person who is not qualified to prescribe such a product. Meaning thereby that free samples can only be supplied to persons qualified to prescribe such a product.
- It also prescribes additional conditions that are to be observed while providing samples.

Indian Medical Association

- It is the only representative, national voluntary organisation of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large.
- Indian Medical Association is the founding member of the World Medical Association (WMA).
- IMA hosted the 3rd World Conference on Medical Education in New Delhi in 1966.

8. Only 7 in 100 anganwadi beneficiaries are in cities: RTI

Why in News?

- For every 100 anganwadi beneficiaries in the country, only 7 are in urban areas, according to the government's response to a Right to Information (RTI) query from The Hindu.

Key Points of RTI

- Only 55 lakh were registered at urban anganwadis, in total 7.95 crore beneficiaries of the anganwadi scheme in the country as on September 30, 2019.
- This is primarily because of a severe lack of anganwadis in cities, leading to poor coverage of the government's flagship programme in early childhood development.

Anganwadis or Day-care centres

- These are set up under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) by the Women and Child Development Ministry to provide a package of six services namely:
 - Supplementary nutrition

- Pre-school non-formal education
- Nutrition & health education
- Immunization
- Health check-up
- Referral services

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme

- The ICDS scheme was launched in 1975.
- The aim of the scheme is to reduce infant mortality and child malnutrition.
- Beneficiaries include children in the age group of six months to six years, and pregnant women and lactating mothers
- It is being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.


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