

2019



drishti

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

**POLITY AND NATION**

18<sup>th</sup> November- 23<sup>rd</sup> November



The Indian **EXPRESS**

live **mint**

BusinessLine



## 1. 250<sup>th</sup> Session of Rajya Sabha

### Why in News?

The Rajya Sabha secretariat has released the first-ever analysis of its legislative work, “**Rajya Sabha: The Journey since 1952**”, on the occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> session of Rajya Sabha. Other events include:

- Release of a commemorative volume on the evolution of Rajya Sabha and its functioning in Hindi and English by the sitting and former members;
- Release of a Silver coin of Rs.250; and
- Release of Postal Stamp of Rs.5.

### About Rajya Sabha

- The Rajya Sabha is the **Upper House (Council of States or Second Chamber or House of Elders)** of the Parliament.
- The maximum strength of the Rajya Sabha is fixed at 250, out of which, 238 are to be the representatives of the states and union territories (elected indirectly) and 12 are nominated by the president.
  - Out of the nine union territories, only **Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu & Kashmir** have representation in Rajya Sabha.
  - The president nominates 12 members to the Rajya Sabha from people who have special knowledge or practical experience in art, literature, science and social service.
  - Each member is elected for a term of six years.
- The **Fourth Schedule** of the Constitution deals with the **allocation of seats** in the Rajya Sabha to the states and union territories.
  - The seats are allotted to the states in the Rajya Sabha on the basis of population.
- The Rajya Sabha (first constituted in 1952) is a continuing chamber, that is, it is a permanent body and not subject to dissolution.
  - However, one-third of its members retire every second year.
  - The retiring members are eligible for re-election and re-nomination any number of times.
- The presiding officer of the Rajya Sabha is known as the Chairman.
  - The **Vice-President** of India is the **ex-officio Chairman** of the Rajya Sabha.
  - The House also elects a Deputy Chairman from among its members.
- **Special Powers of Rajya Sabha:** Due to its federal character, the Rajya Sabha has been given two exclusive or special powers that are not enjoyed by the Lok Sabha:
  - It can authorise the Parliament to make a law on a subject enumerated in the State List (Article 249).
  - It can authorise the Parliament to create new All-India Services common to both the Centre and states (Article 312).

## Importance of Rajya Sabha

- Rajya Sabha has played an important role in **strengthening India's parliamentary democracy** as well as **Indian federalism**.
- It **checks** hasty, defective, careless and ill-considered legislation by making provision of revision and thought.
- It facilitates giving **representation to eminent professionals and experts** who cannot face the direct election.
- It **maintains the federal equilibrium** by protecting the interests of the states against the undue interference of the Centre.
- With its distance from the exigencies and immediate demands of mass electoral politics, the House serves as a **chamber of more informed deliberation**.

## 2. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

### Why in News?

According to a recent survey based on data obtained under RTI Act, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) has been able to reach less than one-third of the beneficiaries.

### Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

- PMMVY is a maternity benefit (DBT) scheme rechristened from **erstwhile Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)**.
- Implemented in all the districts of the country with effect from **1<sup>st</sup> January, 2017**.
- **Centrally sponsored scheme** being executed by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**.
- Cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account or post office account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensate for wage loss.
- **Targeted Beneficiary:** All pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for first live birth except:
  - Those in regular employment with the Central Government or State Government or Public Sector Undertaking; or
  - Those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force.
- **Benefits** under PMMVY include **cash incentive of Rs 5,000 in three instalments** on fulfilling the following conditions:
  - Early registration of pregnancy.
  - Antenatal check-up.
  - Registration of the birth of the child and completion of first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family.
- The eligible beneficiaries would receive the incentive given under the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) for Institutional delivery.

- The incentive received under JSY would be accounted towards maternity benefits. Thus, on an average, a woman gets Rs 6,000.

### **Key Concerns**

- The scheme was able to benefit only 31% of its intended beneficiaries.
- It failed to reach at least 49% of all mothers who would have delivered their first child.
- Given the stipulated conditions, the scheme brings under its ambit 23% of all births but was able to pay full benefits to a mere 14% of all births.
- There is a **need for higher awareness** among the pool of beneficiaries as:
  - Only 66% of pregnant women and 69% of nursing women knew about the scheme.
  - Only 8% of pregnant women and 23% of nursing mothers received some benefits.

### **Challenges in Implementation:**

- An application form of about 23 pages, a slew of documents such as mother-child protection card, Aadhaar card, husband's Aadhaar card and bank passbook aside from linking their bank accounts with Aadhaar.
- The requirement to produce the husband's Aadhaar card excludes women who may be living with men they are not married to, single mothers and those who may be staying at their natal home.
- Women must also have the address of their marital home on their Aadhaar card, which often results in newly weds being either left out or forced to go from door-to-door when pregnant and needing rest and care.

### **Lessons to be learnt from Odisha's 'Mamata' scheme:**

- It covers two births.
- 95% of pregnant women and 89% of nursing mothers had been enrolled.
- The level of awareness was more than 90% among the two categories of women.

### **3. NISHTHA: Teachers' Training Programme**

#### **Why in News?**

The Department of School Education and Literacy has launched a National Mission to improve learning outcomes at the Elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme called NISHTHA – National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement.

## About NISHTHA

- The initiative is under the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha**.
- It is the largest teachers' training programme in the world.
- The objective is:
  - To motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students.
  - Enable teachers to become first level counsellors.
- The programme will cover:
  - All teachers and heads of schools at the elementary level in all Government schools.
  - Faculty members of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs).
  - Block Resource Coordinators and Cluster Resource Coordinators.
- The capacity building programme has been integrated with technology to ensure smooth facilitation, availability of digital content and technology enabled teaching methods to support the teachers.
- A Mobile App and Learning Management System (LMS) based on MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) have been developed by NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training).
  - Moodle is an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) based learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with an integrated system to create personalised learning environments.

## 4. National Institute of Sowa Rigpa

### Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of the National Institute for Sowa-Rigpa in Leh.

- Consequent to the formation of Ladakh as Union Territory and for the promotion of native culture of Ladakh, Government of India decided to promote Sowa-Rigpa system of medicine.

### About National Institute of Sowa Rigpa (NISR)

- The Institute will be an autonomous institute under **Ministry of AYUSH**.
- **Objective:**
  - To bring a valid and useful synergy between traditional wisdom of Sowa-Rigpa and modern science, tools and technology.
  - To promote interdisciplinary research & education of Sowa-Rigpa.
- After setting up of NISR, there will be synergy among the **existing Sowa Rigpa Institutions:**
  - Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi

- Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh, Union Territory of Ladakh - which are under the administrative control of Ministry of Culture and NISR.
- **Advantages of NISR:**
  - Provide an impetus for the revival of Sowa-Rigpa in the Indian Subcontinent.
  - Provide opportunities for students of Sowa-Rigpa not only in India but also from other countries.

### About Sowa-Rigpa

- Sowa-Rigpa (**Science of healing**) commonly known as **Tibetan system of medicine** is one of the oldest, living and well documented medical traditions of the world.
- It has been originated from Tibet and popularly practice in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia and Russia.
- **Yuthog Yonten Gonpo from Tibet** is believed to be the **father of Sowa Rigpa**.
- The majority of theory and practice of Sowa-Rigpa is similar to **“Ayurveda”**.
- It has been popularly practiced in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling (West Bengal), Dharamsala, Lahaul and Spiti (Himachal Pradesh), Union Territory of Ladakh and now all over India.

### 5. Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS)

#### Why in News?

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has launched **Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS)** campaign to reduce child mortality due to Pneumonia.

#### SAANS Campaign

- The campaign will mobilise people for protecting and preventing children from pneumonia; and health personnel, governments & other stakeholders to prioritise treatment towards the control of Pneumonia.
- Under the SAANS campaign, new interventions have been included:
  - A child suffering from Pneumonia will be treated with pre-referral dose of **Amoxicillin by ASHA**.
  - Pulse Oximeter will be used at the Health and Wellness Centre for identification of low oxygen levels in the blood and if required **treated by use of Oxygen**.
- The initiative also aims to create mass awareness about the most effective solutions for pneumonia prevention like breastfeeding, age appropriate complementary feeding, immunisation, good quality air etc.



## **Pneumonia**

- Pneumonia is a form of acute respiratory infection that affects the lungs and can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or fungi.
- Accounts for 15% of all deaths of children under 5 years old. Under-five mortality rate in the country is 37 per 1000 live births, of which 5.3 deaths are caused due to pneumonia.
- Can be prevented by immunisation, adequate nutrition, and by addressing environmental factors.
- Pneumonia caused by bacteria can be treated with antibiotics, but only one third of children with pneumonia receive the antibiotics they need.
- **Government's Initiative:**
  - The government aims to achieve a target of reducing pneumonia deaths among children to less than three per 1,000 live births by 2025.
  - In 2014, India launched '**Integrated Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (IAPPD)**' to undertake collaborative efforts towards prevention of diarrhoea and Pneumonia related under-five deaths.

## **6. Mhadei River**

### **Why in News?**

The longstanding Mhadei (Mandovi in Goa) river dispute between Goa and Karnataka has again come under the spotlight in the wake of upcoming Karnataka assembly by-elections.

### **Mhadei River**

- The river originates in Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary (Western Ghats), Belagavi district of Karnataka.
- It travels 35 km in Karnataka before entering Goa where it travels 82 km before joining the Arabian Sea.

### **Dispute**

- Mhadei, a rainfed river, is the only major sweet-water river in Goa.
  - Thus, it is critical for the water security and ecology of the state.
- The dispute was triggered when Karnataka in 1980s designed a number of dams, canals and barrages to route the Mahadayi river water to the Malaprabha basin.
  - This was done to meet the requirements of water-scarce districts of Bagalkot, Gadag, Dharwad and Belagavi in Karnataka.
- Mhadei Water Disputes Tribunal
  - The Tribunal was established in 2010 by the central government.
  - Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka are party to the tribunal.
  - In 2018, the tribunal awarded 13.42 thousand million cubic (TMC) feet from the Mhadei basin to Karnataka and 24 TMC feet to Goa.
  - Goa and Karnataka have challenged the award.

## Inter-State River Water Disputes

- Mechanism for Inter-State River Water Disputes Resolution:
  - The resolution of water dispute is governed by the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.
  - According to its provisions, if a State Government makes a request regarding any water dispute and the Central Government is of opinion that the water dispute cannot be settled by negotiations, then a Water Disputes Tribunal is constituted for the adjudication of the water dispute.
  - The act was amended in 2002, to include the major recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission - one year time frame to setup the water disputes tribunal and also a 3 year time frame to pronounce a decision.
- **Constitutional Provisions**
  - According to Article 262, in case of disputes relating to waters:
    - Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-State river or river valley.
    - Parliament may, by law provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint as mentioned above.

## 7. Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016

### Why in News?

Various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), civil society and citizens across the North-Eastern States are protesting against the government's bid to reintroduce the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

- The bill seeks to fast-track the process of granting citizenship to members of six minority communities who migrated due to religious persecution from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh without valid travel documents or the validity of whose documents had expired.
- The proposed legislation was cleared by the Lok Sabha in January, 2019 but was pending for consideration and passing by the Rajya Sabha. Consequent to dissolution of 16th Lok Sabha, this Bill had lapsed.

### Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016

- The Bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to allow illegal migrants from minority communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan eligible for Indian citizenship.
  - Minority Communities included in the Bill - Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians - who arrived in India on or before December 31, 2014.



- The bill relaxes the 11-year requirement under the principle of ‘**Citizenship by Naturalisation**’ to 6 years for such persons..
- The Bill provides that the registration of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders may be cancelled if they violate any law.

### **Issues with Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016**

- The Bill, however, does not extend to illegal Muslim migrants. It doesn’t have a provision for Muslim sects like Shias and Ahmediyas who also face persecution in Pakistan.
- It also does not talk about other minority communities in the three neighbouring countries, such as Jews, Bahais, etc.
- The Bill makes illegal migrants eligible for citizenship on the basis of religion; violating Article 14 of the Constitution which guarantees the right to equality.
- The Bill paves the way for non-Muslim minorities who came to Assam from Bangladesh between 1 January 1966 and 24 March 1974 to get citizenship. This negates the NRC exercise and also has also caused apprehensions that as a result of the bill the burden of illegal migrants will be passed on to the state alone.
- The bill would significantly affect Northeastern states that are grappled by the problem of illegal migration from neighboring countries.
- The Bill allows cancellation of OCI registration for violation of any law. This is a wide ground that may cover a range of violations, including minor offences (e.g. parking in a no parking zone).

### **Citizenship Act 1955**

- **Illegal Immigrant** - A person who enters India without a valid passport or stays in the country after the expiry of the visa permit.
  - The Act prohibits illegal migrants from acquiring Indian citizenship.
- **Qualification Criteria** for a person to become a naturalised citizen of the nation:
  - Person must have resided in India for the 12 months immediately preceding the application for citizenship,
  - Person must also be residing in India for 11 of the 14 years preceding the 12 - month period.

## **8. Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK)**

### **Why in News?**

The Union Minister of Women and Child Development and Textiles recently launched the Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK).

- Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) has collaborated with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for this project.

- During the launch event, the father of the Green Revolution in India, M S Swaminathan put forward the five-point action programme for making India nutrition secure:
  - Ensure calorie rich diet for women, expectant mothers and children.
  - Ensure intake of proteins in the form of pulses to eradicate protein hunger in women and children.
  - Eradicate hidden hunger due to deficiency of micronutrients like vitamin A, vitamin B, Iron and Zinc.
  - Ensure clean drinking water supply.
  - Spreading nutrition literacy in every village particularly in mothers with children less than 100 days' old.
- These five point action programme also aligns with different Sustainable Development Goals such as SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well Being) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).
- The Government has launched programmes such as POSHAN Abhiyaan and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) to tackle malnutrition prevalent in the country.

### **Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK)**

- The BPKK will be a repository of diverse crops across 128 agro-climatic zones in India for better nutritional outcomes.
- The Kosh aims at reducing malnutrition through a multi-sectoral results-based framework, including agriculture, among women and children across the country.
- It seeks to promote healthy dietary practices and tackle under-nutrition in a sustainable manner.
  - The initiative will be built on an essential understanding of social, behavioural and cultural practices that promote and reinforce healthy dietary behaviours both at the individual and community level.

## **9. NITI Aayog's Health Report**

### **Why in News?**

NITI Aayog has released the report on '**Health Systems for a New India: Building Blocks - Potential Pathways to Reforms**'.

- The Report advocated for a healthcare system for the middle class which is still not covered under any public health care system.
- The healthcare system would exclude those covered under the newly launched **Ayushman Bharat** scheme that mainly caters to the bottom 40 per cent population of the country.

### **Highlights of the Report**

- The Report places health at the centre-stage of the policy narrative and

charts a clear roadmap for the complete transformation of India's health system.

- It focuses on breaking silos in the health space and removing fragmentation between various initiatives, ensuring greater convergence between ministries as well as the Centre and the states, as already initiated under Ayushman Bharat.
- The report identified **5 focus areas of future health system**:
  - Deliver on unfinished public health agenda.
  - Change health financing away from out of pocket spending into large insurers.
  - Integrate service delivery vertically and horizontally.
  - Empower citizens to become better buyers of health.
  - Harness the power of digital health.

### **Recommendations**

- Health system financing structure should be changed.
  - Predominant undesirable out-of-pocket expenditure is to be reduced.
  - Spending should be directed towards larger risk-pools with strong strategic purchasing capabilities.
- It has recommended best practices adopted by **Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust of Karnataka**.
  - Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust went on to empanel hospitals from neighbouring states, for patients living in border areas for their state health insurance scheme.
  - It is now aiming for providing the health scheme for their entire 6.4 crore population.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** should be considered with an eye on its potential to influence the overall healthcare transformation in India, beyond its current explicit mandate.

### **10. Certifying Agency for Organic Foodgrains**

#### **Why in News?**

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry informed the Lok Sabha about the existent organic food regulatory system in the country during the winter parliamentary session (2019).

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), through the Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations - 2017, has notified domestic standards for organic products recognising:
  - National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP),
  - Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS), or
  - Any other equivalent procedure as prerequisite for qualifying the organic food claim in the domestic market.

## About FSSAI

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is an autonomous statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSS Act).
  - The FSS Act consolidated various acts and orders that had earlier handled food related issues under various Ministries and Departments.
- FSSAI is the **chief food regulator** of the country and is responsible for regulating organic food in the domestic market and imports.
- FSSAI functions under the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**.
- Organisational Structure:
  - The FSSAI comprises of a **Chairperson** and **22 members** out of which **1/3<sup>rd</sup> are to be women**.
  - The Chairperson of FSSAI is appointed by the Central Government.
  - FSSAI is assisted by Scientific Committees and Panels in setting standards and the Central Advisory Committee in coordinating with enforcement agencies.
  - The primary responsibility for enforcement is largely with the State Food Safety Commissioners.
- **The FSSAI has prescribed standards for following food products:**
  - Dairy products and analogues
  - Fats, oils and fat emulsions
  - Fruits and vegetable products
  - Cereal and cereal products
  - Meat and meat products
  - Fish and fish products
  - Sweets & confectionery
  - Sweetening agents including honey
  - Salt, spices, condiments and related products
  - Beverages, (other than dairy and fruits & vegetables based)
  - Other food product and ingredients

## National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)

- NPOP grants organic farming certification through a process of third party certification.
- It is implemented by **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The NPOP standards for production and accreditation system are recognised by European Commission and Switzerland and the United States Department of Agriculture.

- Thus, Indian organic products duly certified by the accredited certification bodies of India are accepted by the importing countries.

### **Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS)**

- PGS certification is only for farmers or communities that can organise and perform as a group. Individual farmers or groups of farmers smaller than five members are not covered under PGS.
- The certification is in the form of a documented logo or a statement.
- It is implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**.
- PGS is applicable to on-farm activities comprising of crop production, processing and livestock rearing, etc.

### **11. Swachh Survekshan Gramin Awards 2019**

#### **Why in News?**

Recently, Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2019 awards were conferred on top ranked states, union territories, and districts in the various categories.

- It was conferred on the occasion of **World Toilet Day**, observed every year on **November 19**.

#### **Key Points**

- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal shakti, had commissioned “Swachh Survekshan Grameen-2019” (SSG 2019) through an independent survey agency.
- Ranking was done based on a comprehensive set of parameters including surveys of public places like schools, Anganwadis, Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Haat/ Bazaars, Panchayat and citizen’s perception of Swachhata.
- **Objective:** To develop rankings of all districts of India on the basis of quantitative and qualitative sanitation (Swachhata) parameters.
- **SSG 2019 survey findings:**
  - 97.5% of people surveyed were aware of SSG 2019.
  - 81.3% of respondents credited **Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G)** for the substantial improvement in cleanliness level.
  - 83% of respondents reported sufficient arrangements in their village to manage liquid waste.
  - 84.1% citizens reported sufficient arrangements in their village to manage solid waste.
- The top ranked States and Districts which received awards are as below:
  - **Top 3 States:**
    1. Tamil Nadu
    2. Haryana
    3. Gujarat

- **Top 3 Districts**
  1. Peddapalli (Telangana)
  2. Faridabad (Haryana)
  3. Rewari (Haryana)
- **State with maximum citizen participation:** Uttar Pradesh
- Corporates felicitated for their efforts towards effective plastic waste management:
  1. Cement Manufacturers Association (CMA)
  2. Hindustan Unilever Limited
  3. AMUL



drishti



To Watch the Video on YouTube,  
[Click Here](#)