News Analysis (19 Aug, 2020)

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Reservations Based on Place of Birth

Why in News

Recently, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh has announced that the **government jobs will be reserved** for the "children" of the state and legal provisions will be made for the same.

Key Points

- **Arguments Against Providing Reservation Based on Place of Birth:**
  - **Article 16** in the Constitution of India refers to equality of opportunity in government jobs.
    - **Article 16(1)** provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to 'employment or appointment' to any office under the State.
    - **Article 16(2)** provides that there cannot be any discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them.
  - Reservation on the basis of domicile and residence would mean **discrimination** as even a minimal departure creates an irrational class depriving a meritorious candidate of his fundamental rights.
  - This kind of parochialism encourages **regionalism** and **threatens the unity of the nation.**

- **Arguments in Favour of Providing Reservation Based on Place of Birth:**
  - **Article 16(3), allows for making provisions in government appointments with respect to residence** (not place of birth).
    > The **Parliament (and not the legislature of a state)** can prescribe residence within a state or union territory as a condition for certain employments or appointments in that state or union territory, or local authority or other authority within that state or union territory.
  - Some states have been using the loopholes in the laws to reserve government jobs for locals. They have used **other criteria like language tests or proof of having resided/studied in the state for a certain period of time.**
    - In Maharashtra, only those living in the state for over 15 years with fluency in Marathi are eligible.
    - In Jammu and Kashmir, government jobs are reserved for "domiciles"
    - In West Bengal, reading and writing skills in Bengali is a criterion in recruitment to some posts.
    - Last year, the Govt of Karnataka issued a notification mandating private employers to give "priority" to Kannadigas for clerical and factory jobs in the state.
  - It is argued that giving preferential treatment to the residents of a state will help in **rightful allocation of the resources of the state** and would encourage people to work within the boundaries of their state.
  - This is also seen as a way to **stop <u>migration</u> of people** from backward states to metropolitans, thereby reducing the burden on such cities.

Distinction between domicile status and place of birth

- According to the SC ruling in DP Joshi vs Madhya Bharat case,1955, **Domicile or status of residence is a fluid concept** that can change from time to time, **unlike place of birth,** which is fixed.
- Domicile of a person means his **permanent home.**
- The place of birth is one of several grounds on which domicile status is conferred.

SC Judgments:
- In **2019, the Allahabad High Court** struck down a recruitment notification issued by the Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Service Selection Commission, which prescribed preference for women who were "original residents" of the state.
- In the **Kailash Chand Sharma vs State Of Rajasthan case, 2002,** the Supreme Court ruled that residence, be it within a state, district or any other area, cannot be a basis for preferential reservation or treatment.
- While the Constitution specifically prohibits discrimination based on place of birth, the Supreme Court, in **DP Joshi vs Madhya Bharat case, 1955** has held domicile reservation, especially in educational institutions, as constitutional.

Way Forward

- The move to give reservation to the candidates born in the state itself runs **against the spirit of constitutional equality and fraternity.** It is more likely that such politically motivated steps would be overturned by the judiciary as has been done several times in the past.
- Also, the government is not an employment guaranteeing agency rather an authority which should create an environment through its policies which minimizes inequalities in income, status, facilities and opportunities.

Source: IE

No Audit of PM-CARES Funds by CAG: SC

Why in News

The Supreme Court said that **being a public charitable trust,** "there is no occasion for audit of Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (**PM-CARES Fund**) by the **Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) of India**"

It also refused to order transfer of funds from the PM CARES Fund to the **National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).**

Key Points

- **No Audit by CAG:** The Court ruled that while NDRF is to be audited by the CAG of India according to the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, a public charitable trust like PM-CARES Fund need not be.
  - The Fund will, however, be **audited by an independent auditor.**

- **No Transfer of Funds of PM-CARES to NDRF:** The Court ruled "The PM CARES Fund is a charitable trust registered under the **Registration Act, 1908.** The trust does not receive any Budgetary support or any Government money."
    - NDRF, formed under **Section 46** of the DM Act of 2005, were provided for by Central and State Budgets.
- **Individuals Can Contribute to NDRF:** The court held that there is "no statutory prohibition on individuals to make voluntary contributions to NDRF" under **Section 46(1)(b)** of the DM Act.
- **No New National Plan:** The Court also also rejected the request for a direction to the government to put in place a new **National Disaster Management Plan** under the DM Act, to deal with Covid-19 situation.
    - The bench said "all aspects of epidemics, all measures to contain an epidemic, preparedness, response, mitigation have been elaborately dealt in the **National Disaster Management Plan, 2019."**
- **No intervention in Minimum Standards of Relief:** The court also declined to intervene with the "minimum standards of relief" and the necessary guidelines issued by the government under **Section 12** of the DM Act.
    - The provision holds that the **National Authority shall recommend guidelines for the minimum standards of relief to be provided to persons affected by disaster,** which shall include the minimum requirements to be provided in the relief camps in relation to shelter, food, drinking water, medical cover and sanitation; special provisions to be made for widows and orphans; ex gratia assistance on account of loss of life as also assistance on account of damage to houses and for restoration of means of livelihood, among other things.

Background

- The government authorities **invoked their respective powers** under **the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005** to deal with the **Covid-19 outbreak** in the country.
- The PM-CARES Fund was created to **deal with any kind of emergency or distress situation like posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that the **PM-CARES Fund is not a public authority** under the ambit of the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005.
- It also **denied information on the number of applications and appeals** related to PM-CARES and the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, raising concerns on its **transparency** and **accountability.**

- Recently, the Fund's website gave information that it collected more than ₹3,076 crore in the first five days after it was set up which also includes foreign donations. The Fund's website says that ₹3,100 crore have been sanctioned from the PM-CARES Fund to be spent on ventilators, migrant worker welfare and vaccine development.

National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)

- It provides a framework and direction to the government agencies for all phases of the disaster management cycle.
- The primary aim of the plan is to make India disaster resilient and drastically lessen the damage caused during and in the aftermath of disasters, natural and man-made.
- The National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) was first released in 2016.The plan was updated in 2016, 2018 and 2019.
- The **NDMP 2019 incorporates Prime Minister's ten point agenda for Disaster Risk Reduction.**

Source :TH

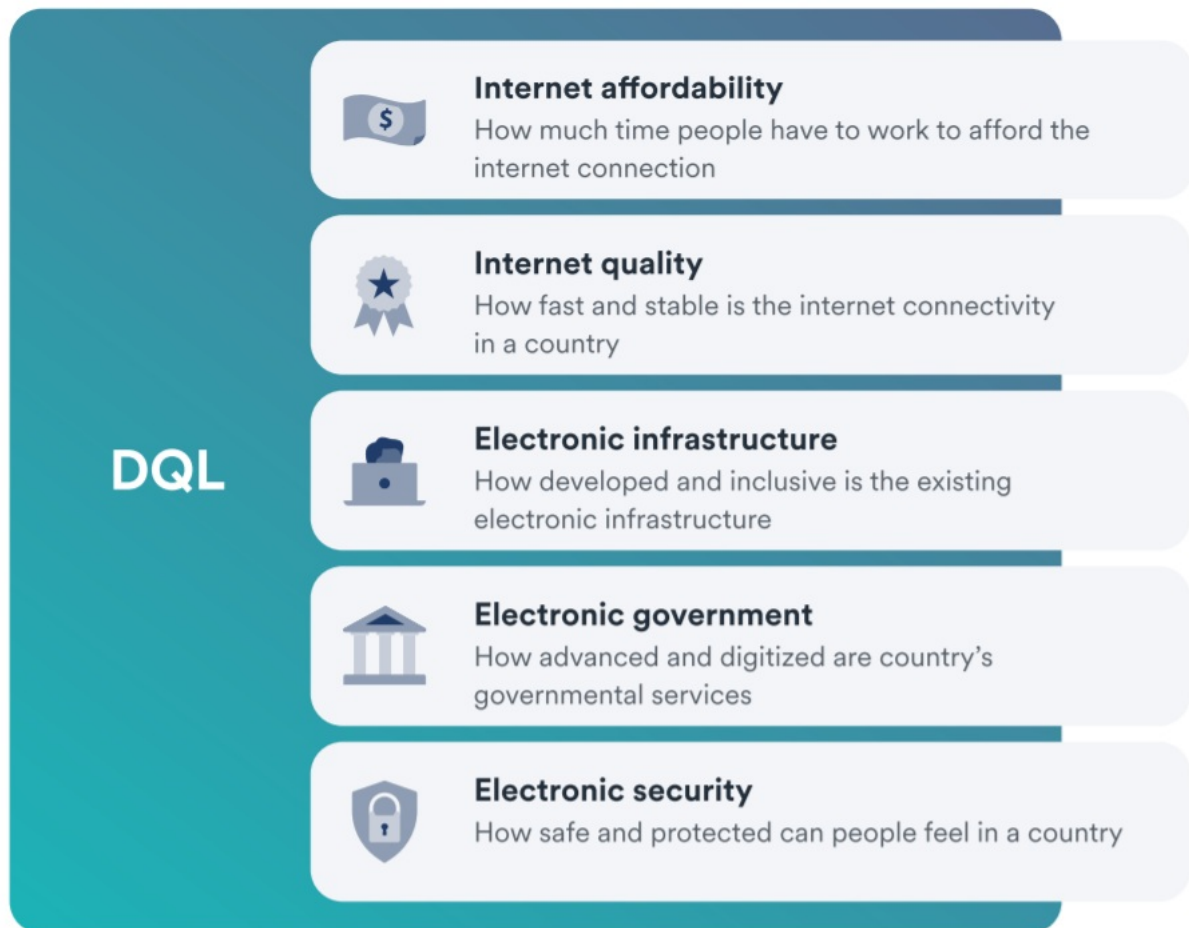# Digital Quality of Life Index 2020: SurfShark

Why in News

Recently, the **Digital Quality of Life (DQL) Index 2020** has been released by **SurfShark,** an online privacy solutions provider.

According to it, **India ranks among the lowest** in the world in terms of Internet quality.

Key Points

- **Coverage:** It is **global research on the quality of digital wellbeing in 85 countries** (81% of the global population).

- **Parameters:** The study indexes the countries by looking at **five fundamental pillars** that define the digital quality of life namely, **internet affordability, internet quality, electronic infrastructure, electronic security and electronic government.**

    Underpinning these pillars are 12 indicators that are interrelated and work together to provide a measure of the overall digital quality of life.

- **GDP and DQL:** Although **GDP per capita has a strong correlation with the DQL,** there are countries that have a better digital quality of life with a lower GDP per capita than expected.
    - **13 countries** (Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Greece, etc.) **exceed the expected digital quality of life by outperforming others** in providing higher levels of e-security and more affordable internet connectivity.
    - **Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia** with relatively high GDP per capita are **underperforming** in providing better digital wellbeing for their citizens due to low levels of internet quality and e-security.

- **Affordability:** The **affordability of the internet plays a major role in ensuring accessibility** but has a notably **lower correlation with the DQL** than the other pillars.

  > For instance, the internet is less affordable in some Southern or Eastern European countries but people there still enjoy higher than the average digital quality of life.

- **Internet Infrastructure:** The **stability of the internet infrastructure** has become of crucial importance during the **Covid-19 pandemic** when video conferences replaced live meetings. Consequently, it impacted the quality of people's digital lives.

  > During the first month of the lockdowns, 49 of 85 countries experienced deteriorated speeds of mobile internet and 44 countries experienced deteriorated speeds of broadband connection.

- **Global Rankings:**
  - **7 out of 10 countries with the highest DQL are in Europe,** with **Denmark leading** among 85 countries.
    > **Scandinavian countries excel** in offering high-quality digital wellbeing to their citizens.
  - **Canada leads in American continents, Japan in Asia, South Africa in Africa and News Zealand in Oceania.**

- **Indian Rankings:** India stands at the **overall rank of 57** out of the 85 countries.
  - **Internet Affordability: 9th place** and outperforms countries like the UK, the USA and China.
  - **Internet Quality: 78th place** and is almost at the bottom of the pillar.
  - **E-infrastructure: 79th place** and below countries like Guatemala and Sri Lanka.
  - **Electronic Security: 57th position.**
  - **E-government: 15th place** and just below countries like New Zealand and Italy.

Government Initiatives Related to Internet

- **Digital India Programme**: It is an umbrella program to prepare India for a knowledge-based transformation.
  > **e-Kranti: National e-Governance Plan 2.0** which is an essential pillar of the Digital India initiative.
- **Digilockers:** It enables Indian citizens to store certain official documents on the cloud.
- **BHIM App:** To enable digital payments.
- **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan:** To make citizens digitally literate.

- **Bharat Net programme:** To provide an optical fibre network in all gram panchayats.

Jobs Data: CMIE

Why in News

Recently, the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)** has released data related to jobs gained or lost during the **Covid-19 lockdown** period (April-July 2020).

- CMIE is a leading **business information company.** It was established in 1976, primarily as an independent think tank.
- CMIE produces **economic and business databases** and develops specialised analytical tools to deliver these to its customers for decision making and for research. It **analyses the data to decipher trends in the economy.**

Key Points

- **Salaried Jobs:**
  - They suffered a **total loss estimated to be 18.9 million** during April-July 2020.
    - 17.7 million salaried jobs were lost in April. After gaining 3.9 million jobs in June, 5 million jobs were again lost in July.
  - They **offer better terms of employment** and better wages, and have a **higher share in urban parts** of the country than rural parts.
  - They are **more resilient to economic shocks** and not lost easily, however, once lost they are far more difficult to retrieve.
  - Only 21% of all employment in India is in the form of a salaried employment.
  - Loss of urban salaried jobs is likely to have a particular **debilitating impact on the economy,** besides causing **immediate hardship to middle-class households.**
    - Since the lockdown was announced, several companies across sectors have taken to job cuts, along with salary reductions and leave without pay.
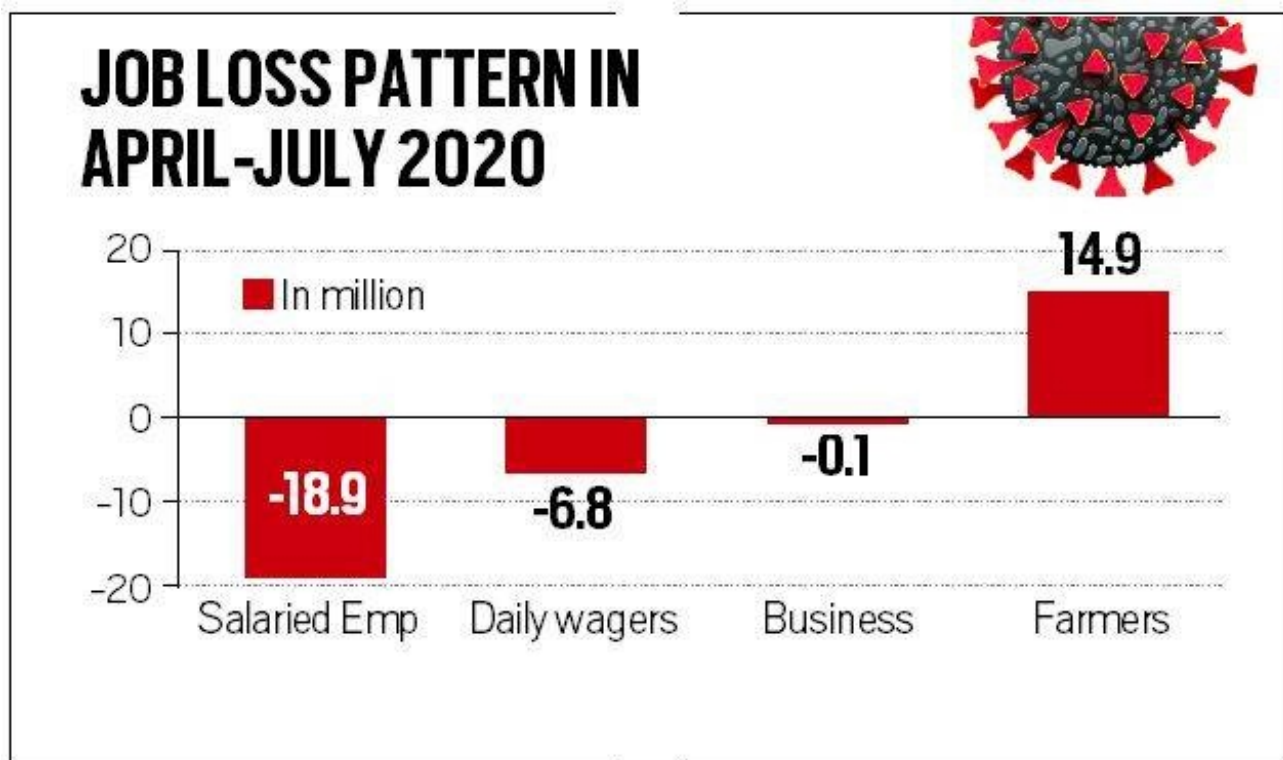
- **Informal and Non-Salaried Jobs:**
  - This category of job has **shown improvement** during the April-July 2020 increasing to 325.6 million in July 2020 from 317.6 million in 2019, an increase of 2.5%.
    This is because of the **opening of the country in a phased manner.**
  - This category of employment **accounted for about 32% of the total employment but it suffered 75%** of the hit in April 2020.
    - Out of total 121.5 million jobs lost in April 2020, 91.2 million of the jobs were lost from this category.
    - Small traders, hawkers and daily wage labourers were the worst hit by the lockdown.
- **Farm Jobs:**
  - The jobs lost in the non-farm sectors have resulted in **people moving towards farm employment.** The farm sector gained 14.9 million jobs in the April-July 2020 period.
  - In 2019, 42.39% of the workforce in India was employed in agriculture.

JOB LOSS PATTERN IN APRIL-JULY 2020

	In million		
Salaried Emp	Daily wagers	Business	Farmers
-18.9	-6.8	-0.1	14.9

Source: IE

Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge

Why in News

The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has announced **'Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge- Innovate Solutions for #Aatmanirbhar Bharat'** to provide further impetus to the **Start-up ecosystem, innovation and research** in the country.

MeitY has taken various initiatives and measures to improve innovation-led ecosystem with a **Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE) scheme, Centre of Excellences in IoT/[FinTech](#) space,** etc.

Key Points

- **About the Challenge:**
  - **'Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge- Innovate Solutions for #Aatmanirbhar Bharat'** seeks to invite **innovators, startups and students to use microprocessors,** developed by IIT Madras and C-DAC, to **generate various technology products.**
    - **IIT Madras** and **Center for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC)** have developed two microprocessors named **SHAKTI (32 bit)** and **VEGA (64 bit)** respectively using **Open Source Architecture** under the aegis of **Microprocessor Development Programme** of MeitY.
  - The Challenge demands contestants to not only **tinker with the Swadeshi Processor IPs** and facilitate them with **innovating the economical solutions for societal needs** but also make available the entire **home-grown ecosystem around Swadeshi Processors** to develop the complex designs for catering to both global and domestic requirements in near future.
  - The Challenge spread over **10 months,** kick-started with the **registration process through MyGov Portal** on **18th August 2020** and will culminate in June 2021
- **Significance:**
  - Under the **[Aatmanibhar Bharat Abhiyan](#)**, there is a **growing need for Swadeshi Compute Hardware,** that shall be part of every smart device deployed in different domains, including **[electronics](#)** for public utility services such as surveillance, transportation, environmental condition monitoring, to commodity appliances like smart fans/ locks/ washing machines.
  - In addition, with **growing penetration of smart electronics in strategic areas including space, defence and nuclear energy,** the need for Swadeshi Compute Hardware is crucial.
  - The **dependence on external vendors,** quick enhancements to suit the ever-growing requirements, and most-importantly **security,** further drives self-reliance in the hardware domain.

Microprocessor Development Program

- It was approved in **August 2017** with **Rs. 289.21** crore earmarked for the programme over four years.
- **C-DAC, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** and **IIT Bombay** were roped in for implementation of the project.
  - **C-DAC is the premier R&D organisation of the MeitY** for carrying out R&D in IT, Electronics and associated areas.
- The **development of an indigenous microprocessor is necessary** to meet domestic needs and shield the country from potential future embargoes on transfer of critical technology.
  - A microprocessor is an **Integrated Circuit (IC)** that contains a few millions of transistors (semiconductor-based electronic devices) fused on a semiconductor chip. It is just a few millimetres in dimension and is used in almost every electronic device—from the microwave and washing machine in homes to advanced supercomputers of a space station.
- The MDP was expected to lead to a **reduction in overall cost of production, maintenance and upgradation of electronic products and systems** in India, and cut foreign exchange outgo.
- Under the program, not only industry-grade microprocessors have been designed from the scratch but also the 'compute ecosystem' around them has been evolved as a step towards meeting India's future requirements. **SHAKTI** and **VEGA** are two microprocessors developed under the programme.

Open Source Architecture

- Open-source architecture is a concept that combines the advances in design and technologies with the practices and ideas from open-source projects to help reframe an architectural design as a collective and collaborative endeavor.
- Some of its **features** are as follow:
  - The solutions provided are not restrictive. Future modifications or add-ons to the architecture are possible for the best interest of the end user.
  - It helps in the integration of the widest range of technologies and components.
- The **proprietary design or technique** is one that is owned by a company. It also implies that the company has not divulged specifications that would allow other companies to duplicate the product.

MyGov

- MyGov platform was launched in **2014** by the Prime Minister of India.
- It is a unique first of its kind **participatory governance initiative** involving the common citizen at large.

- The idea of MyGov brings the government closer to the common man by the use of an online platform creating an interface for healthy exchange of ideas and views involving the common citizen and experts with the ultimate goal to contribute to the social and economic transformation of India.

Source: PIB

National Cancer Registry Programme Report 2020

Why in News

According to the recently released **National Cancer Registry Programme Report 2020, cancer cases in India are likely to increase** to 15.6 lakhs by 2025, a 12% increase from the current estimated cases.

> The report has been released by the **Indian Council of Medical Research** (ICMR) and the **National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research** (NCDIR), Bengaluru.

Key Points

- **Number of Cases:** The number of cases are likely to touch 15.6 lakhs by 2025 from the current 13.9 lakhs in 2020.
- **Major Cause: Tobacco-related cancers** are estimated to contribute **27.1% of the total cancer burden.**
- **Regional Distribution:** Cancers related to use of any form of tobacco were **highest in the northeastern region** of the country and in **higher proportions in men.**
- **Gender Prevalence:**
    - Among **women, breast cancers** are estimated to contribute 14.8% and **cervical cancer** (tumour of the cervix, the lowermost part of the uterus) are estimated to contribute 5.4%.
    - For **both men and women, cancers of the gastrointestinal tract** are estimated to contribute 19.7% of the total cancer burden.
    - Cancers of the **lung, mouth, stomach and oesophagus** (the muscular tube that runs from the throat to the stomach) are the most common cancers among men.
- **Detection and Spread: Cancers of the lung** were diagnosed at a **stage of spread to distant sites,** while **cancers of head and neck, stomach, breast and cervix** were in **higher proportions with a locoregional** (restricted to a localized region of the body) **spread.**

- **Cancer Incidence Rate:**
    - For the **male population,** it ranges from 269.4 (Aizawl, Mizoram) to 39.5 (Osmanabad and Beed, Maharashtra) per 1,00,000 population.
    - For the **female population,** it ranges from 219.8 (Papumpare, Arunachal Pradesh) to 49.4 (Osmanabad and Beed, Maharashtra) per 1,00,000 population.
    - A significant **increase in the incidence rates of breast cancers in women** and **lung and head and neck cancers in both men and women** was observed.
    - A **declining trend** was seen in most of the registries for **cancer of the cervix.**

Cancer

- Cancer is a generic term for a **large group of diseases characterized by the growth of abnormal cells beyond their usual boundaries** that can then invade adjoining parts of the body and/or spread to other organs.
- Other common terms used for cancer are **malignant tumors and neoplasms.**
- Cancer is one of the **leading causes of death globally.**
- **World Cancer Day** is organized by the **Union for International Cancer Control** (UICC) and celebrated each year on **4th February.**
    2020 theme: 'I Am and I Will', which acknowledges that everyone has the capacity to address the cancer burden.

Indian Council of Medical Research

- It is the **apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion** of biomedical research.
- **Mandate:** To conduct, coordinate and implement medical research for the benefit of the society, translating medical innovations into products/processes and introducing them into the public health system.
- It is **funded by the Government of India** through the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research

- It is one of its kind of unique institution which **utilizes information science for health research** as its integral component.
- **Objective:** To **sustain and develop a national research data-base** on cancer, **diabetes**, **cardiovascular disease** (CVD) and stroke through recent advances in electronic information technology with a national collaborative network.

Source: TH

Invisible Shield against Electromagnetic Interference

Why in News

Recently, scientists from the **Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS),** Bengaluru, have **designed a metal mesh structure** to construct an **invisible shield** against **Electromagnetic Interference (EMI).**

> CeNS is an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.

Electromagnetic Interference

- EMI is an **electromagnetic emission** that **causes a disturbance** in another piece of electrical equipment.
    - Any device that has an electronic circuit can be susceptible to EMI.
- It **compromises the performance** of electrical equipment by obstructing and degrading data, sometimes even losing data completely.
- EMI can be **attributed to a wide span of the electromagnetic spectrum** including radio and microwave frequencies.
- In 1933, the **International Special Committee on Radio Interference (CISPR)** was created to address emerging concerns over EMI.

Key Points

- **Metal Mesh Structure:**
    - The scientists have developed a **copper metal mesh on polyethylene terephthalate (PET) sheet,** instead of continuous film, which exhibits a **visible transmittance** of about 85%.
        - **Transmittance** describes how much light passes through a sample. In other words, it is light that is not absorbed, scattered, or reflected. It is usually measured in percentage.
    - The **metal mesh networks on the substrate are more transparent than continuous film** because it covers only 7% area of the substrate, unlike 100% coverage of continuous film.
    - Metal mesh provides **better electromagnetic shielding** compared to the same thickness of continuous metal film where transparency can be compromised.

- **Benefits:**
    - The main purpose of the EMI shield is to **isolate a device's energy** so it doesn't affect anything else and **blocks external energy** from getting in.
        - Without shielding, electronics wouldn't function as designed or may even stop working altogether.
    - This 'invisible' shield can be **used in various military stealth applications** and can cover electromagnetic wave emitter or absorber devices without compromising aesthetics.
        - Besides the physical shape, reducing the electromagnetic signature, which includes radar waves and radio signals, is an important element for enhancing the stealth capability of a weapon platform.

Source: PIB

Dhanwantri Rath: Ayurveda Health Services

Why in News

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the **All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)** and **Delhi Police** for extending the **Ayurveda Preventive and Promotive health services** in the residential colonies of **Delhi Police.**

These services are to be provided through a **mobile unit named 'Dhanwantari Rath'** and **Police Wellness Centres** and are to be catered by AIIA, supported by the Ministry of AYUSH.

Key Points

- Dhanwantari Rath and Police Wellness Centres would be **outreach OPD (OutPatient Department) services of AIIA** and aim to benefit the Families of Delhi Police through Ayurveda preventive health care services.
- **Dhanwantari Rath –** a mobile unit of Ayurveda health care services would consist of a team of Doctors who would be visiting Delhi Police colonies regularly.
    - These Ayurveda health care services are **expected to reduce the incidence/prevalence of various diseases** and also **reduce the number of referrals to hospitals** thereby **reducing cost to the healthcare system** as well **as patients.**

- Earlier, **AYURAKSHA, a joint venture of AIIA and Delhi Police** aimed for **maintaining the health of frontline Covid warriors like Delhi police personnel** through Ayurveda immunity boosting measures was launched.
  With the latest MoU, Ayurveda Preventive and Promotive health care will be extended to the families of Delhi Police personnel.

Ayurveda

- It is made up of two words- **Ayuh** and **Veda.** Ayuh means life and Veda means knowledge or science. Thus 'Ayurveda' in totality means 'Science of life'.
- It incorporates all aspects of life whether physical, psychological, spiritual or social.
- It is considered as **one of the ancient health care systems.**
  Atharva-veda mainly deals with extensive Ayurvedic information. That is why Ayurveda is said to be the offshoot of Atharva-Veda.
- The **Ministry of <u>AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy)</u>** was formed in 2014 to ensure the optimal development and propagation of AYUSH systems of health care.

All India Institute of Ayurveda

- It is an **autonomous organisation under the Ministry of AYUSH.**
- It has been conceived as an **apex institute for Ayurveda.**
- It aims at **bringing a synergy between traditional wisdom of Ayurveda and modern tools and technology.**
- The institute offers postgraduate and doctoral courses in various disciplines of Ayurveda and focuses on fundamental research of Ayurveda, drug development, standardization, quality control, safety evaluation and scientific validation of Ayurvedic medicine.
- It is located in **New Delhi.**

<u>Source: PIB</u>