



Solid Waste Management

For Prelims: Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste, Solid Waste Management Rules, Government's Initiatives

For Mains: Challenge in managing Solid Waste, Role of Informal sector in waste management, Challenges for informal sector in waste management, related government's initiatives

Why in News?

With **burgeoning population and even faster urbanisation**, there has been an explosion in the generation of **Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)** in Indian cities.

- It is important to note that the engagement of **formal waste management system remains low in the cities**, primarily due to insufficient funds, low sectoral development and lack of know-how about sustainable waste management businesses.
- Hence, in many developing countries, including **India, waste collection and material recycling activities are majorly performed by the informal waste sector.**

What is the Role of the Informal Sector in Solid Waste Management?

- **About:**
 - **Informal waste collectors** include individuals, associations or waste-traders who are involved in sorting, sale and purchase of **recyclable materials**.
 - Waste picker is a person **informally engaged** in the collection and recovery of reusable and recyclable solid waste from the source of waste generation to sale of waste to recyclers directly or through intermediaries.
 - It is estimated that the **informal waste economy** employs about 0.5% - 2% of the urban population worldwide.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Least Rewarding Job:**
 - **The informal sector** is often not officially approved, recognised and acknowledged, besides the fact that they potentially contribute to **waste recycling practices of cities** by collecting, sorting, processing, storing and trading waste materials in the recycling value chain.
 - **Health Issue:**
 - The informal sector lives in **close proximity to dumpsites** and works under **unhygienic and unhealthy conditions**.
 - The workers have **no access to drinking water or public toilets**.
 - They do not have appropriate personal **protective equipment (PPE)** such as **gloves, gumboots and aprons**.
 - Due to the poor living and working conditions, **malnutrition**, anaemia and **tuberculosis** are common among them.
 - **Social Treatment:**
 - They are treated as **dirty and unwanted elements of society**, and they have to deal with exploitative social behaviour.
 - **Wages and living conditions** of different strata of informal waste-workers differ

greatly.

- **Others:**
 - **Child labour** is quite prevalent and life expectancy being low.
 - Waste-pickers are **not covered under any labour legislation**.
 - As a result, they **do not benefit from social security** and **medical insurance schemes**.

What do we need to know about Solid Waste?

▪ About:

- **Solid Waste includes** Solid or semi-solid domestic waste, sanitary waste, commercial waste, institutional waste, catering and market waste and other non-residential wastes, street sweepings, silt removed or collected from the surface drains, **horticulture** waste, **agriculture** and dairy waste, treated **biomedical waste** excluding industrial waste, bio-medical waste and **e-waste**, battery waste, radio-active waste etc.

▪ India's Status:

- Urban India alone generates nearly **0.15 million tonnes per day** of Municipal Solid Waste.
- It is estimated that about **62 million tonnes of waste** are generated annually in the country, out of which 5.6 million is **plastic waste**, 0.17 million is biomedical waste.
 - In addition, hazardous waste generation is 7.90 million tonnes per annum and 15 lakh tonnes is e-waste.
- The volume of waste is projected to reach 165 million tonnes by 2031 and 436 million tonnes by 2050.

▪ Challenges in Waste Management:

- **Increasing urbanisation in India** has resulted in **hyper-consumerism**, resulting in more waste generation.
- **Organic farming** and composting are not economically attractive to the Indian farmer, as **chemical pesticides** are heavily subsidised, and the compost is not efficiently marketed.
- **Lack of financial resources** with Municipal Corporations/Urban Local Bodies, result in **poor collection, transportation and management of solid waste**.

What are the Key Features of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016?

- **Responsibilities of Generators** have been introduced to segregate waste in to three streams:
 - **Wet** (Biodegradable)
 - **Dry** (Plastic, Paper, metal, wood, etc.)
 - **Domestic hazardous wastes** (diapers, napkins, empty containers of cleaning agents, mosquito repellents, etc.) and **handover segregated wastes to authorized rag-pickers or waste collectors** or local bodies.
- Waste Generators will have to pay:
 - **'User Fee'** to waste collectors.
 - **'Spot Fine'** for Littering and Non-segregation.
- **Used sanitary waste** like diapers, sanitary pads should be **wrapped securely in pouches provided by manufacturers or brand owners** of these products or in a suitable wrapping material and shall place the same in the bin meant for dry waste / non- bio-degradable waste.
- The concept of partnership in **Swachh Bharat** has been introduced.
 - Bulk and institutional generators, market associations, event organizers and hotels and restaurants have been made **directly responsible for segregation and sorting** the waste and managing in partnership with local bodies.
- All manufacturers of **disposable products** such as tin, glass, plastics packaging etc. or brand owners who introduce such products in the market shall **provide necessary financial assistance to local authorities** for the establishment of a **waste management system**.
- The bio-degradable waste should be **processed, treated** and **disposed** of through **composting** or **bio-methanation** **within the premises as far as possible**.
 - The residual waste shall be given to the waste collectors or agency as directed by the local authority.

What are Government's Initiatives for Solid Waste Management?

- **Waste to Wealth Portal:**
 - The Waste to Wealth Mission is one of the nine scientific missions of the [Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council \(PMSTIAC\)](#).
 - It aims to identify, develop, and deploy technologies to treat waste to generate energy, recycle materials, and extract resources of value.
- **National Water Mission:**
 - It was launched with the objective of **conservation of water, minimising wastage and ensuring more equitable distribution** both across and within states through integrated water resources development and management.
- **Waste to Energy:**
 - A **waste-to-energy or energy-from-waste plant** converts municipal and industrial solid waste into electricity and/or heat for industrial processing.
- **Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules, 2016:**
 - It mandates the **generators of plastic waste to take steps to minimize generation of plastic waste**, prevent **littering of plastic waste**, and ensure **segregated storage of waste** at source among other measures.

Way Forward

- **Informal Workers:**
 - There is an urgent need to **frame and implement a uniform waste-picker welfare law** that recognises and integrates them into the waste management chain.
 - **It must include basic provisions** related to mandatory identity cards, access to waste for collection, segregation, and sorting, PPE to minimise occupational hazards, right to basic necessities like water, sanitation and facilities for clean living, and health insurance.
 - The role of waste-pickers should be formalized by permitting them to use the **designated collection and compaction stations** (transfer stations, material recovery facilities) in a city for the segregation of recyclables.
- **Partnership:**
 - Government should establish **partnerships with waste-picker organisations**, which is also mentioned in the SWM 2016 Rules.
 - There is a need to identify, organize, train, and empower the waste-pickers.
- **Treating Waste as Economic Opportunity:**
 - **Generate Energy:**
 - **Gasification of waste:** Solid Waste used as raw material for [biogas plants](#).
 - **Recycle Materials:**
 - **Recycle at the segregation stage** presents a good economic opportunity.
 - [Circular economy](#) path adopted by India could bring in an annual benefit of 40 Lakh Crores (Estimated).
 - **Extract resources of value:**
 - **Processing of e-waste** could enable extraction of precious metals such as **copper, gold, aluminium etc.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. As per the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in India, which one of the following statements is correct? (2019)

- (a) Waste generator has to segregate waste into five categories.
- (b) The Rules are applicable to notified urban local bodies, notified towns and all industrial townships only.
- (c) The Rules provide for exact and elaborate criteria for the identification of sites for landfills and waste

processing facilities.

(d) It is mandatory on the part of the waste generator that the waste generated in one district cannot be moved to another district.

Ans: (c)

Explanation:

- Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 replaced the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000.
- The Rules are applicable beyond:
 - Municipal areas and extend to urban agglomerations,
 - Census towns, notified industrial townships,
 - Areas under the control of Indian Railways, airports, airbase, port and harbour,
 - Defence establishments,
 - Special economic zones,
 - State and Central Government organizations,
 - Places of pilgrims, religious and historical importance.
- The responsibility of generators has been introduced to segregate waste into three categories - Wet, Dry and Hazardous Waste.
 - The generator will have to pay 'User Fee' to waste collector and for 'Spot Fine' for littering and nonsegregation.
- Waste processing facilities will have to be set up by all local bodies.
 - Further the landfill site shall be 100 metres away from a river, 200 metres from a pond and 20 km away from airports/airbase.
 - Hence, the rules provide for exact and elaborate criteria for identification of landfill sites and waste processing facilities.
- The bio-degradable waste should be processed, treated and disposed of through composting or biomethanation within the premises as far as possible. The residual waste shall be given to its waste collectors or agency as directed by the local authority.
- There is no such provision that makes it mandatory on the part of waste generator that the waste generated in one district cannot be moved to another district.
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. What are the impediments in disposing of the huge quantities of discarded solid waste which are continuously being generated? How do we safely remove the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? **(2018)**

[Source: DTE](#)

PMLA & Supreme Court

For Prelims: Foreign Exchange, Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, FEMA, Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 FEOA, Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 COFEPOSA, ED, Supreme Court

For Mains: Issue of Money Laundering, Significance of Black Money, Powers of ED, Judicial Review

Why in News?

In a recent hearing, the [Supreme Court of India](#) upheld the constitutional validity of the [Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002](#).

- The court underlined that **the principle of innocence of the accused/offender is regarded as a [human right](#) but that presumption can be interdicted by a law made by the [Parliament/Legislature](#).**

What has the Supreme Court said in the Ruling?

- **Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR):**
 - **Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR)** cannot be equated with an [FIR](#).
 - Supplying an ECIR in every case to the person concerned is **not mandatory** and **“it is enough if the Enforcement Directorate (ED), at the time of arrest, discloses the grounds of such arrest”**.
 - The ECIR is an **internal document of the ED** and the fact that FIR in respect of scheduled offence has not been recorded, does not come in the way of ED authorities to commence inquiry/investigation
- **Section 3 of PMLA Act:**
 - **Section 3 of the PMLA Act 2002** has a wider reach and captures that offence of [money laundering](#) is an **independent offence** regarding the process or activity connected with the **proceeds of crime which had been derived or obtained as a result of criminal activity** relating to or in relation to a scheduled offence.
 - The ruling also made it clear that:
 - Offence under Section 3 **“is dependent on illegal gain of property as a result of criminal activity relating to a scheduled offence”**.
 - The Authorities under the 2002 Act **cannot prosecute any person on notional basis or on the assumption** that a scheduled offence has been committed, unless it is so registered with the jurisdictional police and pending enquiry including by way of criminal complaint before the competent forum.
- **Enforcement Directorate:**
 - The bench upheld the **ED’s power under Section 5 of the Act** (order provisional attachment of any proceeds of crime).
 - The Court stated that **Section 5 provides for a balancing arrangement** to secure the interests of the person and also ensures that the proceeds of crime remain available to be dealt with in the manner provided by the 2002 Act.
 - **It rejected the argument that ED authorities are police officers** and, hence, a statement recorded by them under Section 50 of the Act would be hit by [Article 20\(3\) of the Constitution](#) which says **no person accused of an offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself**.

What do we know about the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002?

- It is a **criminal law** enacted to **prevent money laundering** and to **provide for confiscation of property** derived from, or involved in, money-laundering and related matters.
- It forms the **core of the legal framework** put in place by India to combat **Money Laundering**.
- The provisions of this act are applicable to all financial institutions, banks (Including [RBI](#)), [mutual funds](#), [insurance companies](#), and their financial intermediaries.
- **PMLA (Amendment) Act, 2012:**
 - Adds the concept of **‘reporting entity’** which would include a **banking company, financial institution, intermediary etc.**
 - PMLA, 2002 levied a **fine up to Rs 5 lakh**, but the **amendment act has removed this upper limit**.
 - It has provided for **provisional attachment and confiscation of property** of any

person involved in such activities.

What do we know about the Enforcement Directorate?

▪ History:

- **The Directorate of Enforcement or the ED** is a multi-disciplinary organization **mandated** with investigation of **economic crimes** and **violations of [foreign exchange laws](#)**.
- The origin of this Directorate goes back to **1st May, 1956**, when an '**Enforcement Unit**' was formed in the **Department of Economic Affairs** for handling **Exchange Control Laws** violations under **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (FERA '47)**.
- With the onset of the process of **economic liberalization**, FERA, 1973, which was a regulatory law, **was repealed** and in its place, **[Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 \(FEMA\)](#)** came into operation.
- Recently, with the increase in the number of cases relating to economic offenders taking shelter in foreign countries, the **Government has passed the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA)** and ED is entrusted with its enforcement.

▪ Functions:

- **The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA):**
 - **ED has been given the responsibility to enforce the provisions of the PMLA** by conducting investigation to trace the assets derived from proceeds of crime, to provisionally attach the property and to ensure prosecution of the offenders and confiscation of the property by the Special court.
- **The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA):**
 - ED has been given the responsibility to **conduct investigation into suspected contraventions of foreign exchange laws and regulations**, to adjudicate and impose penalties on those adjudged to have contravened the law.
- **[The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 \(FEOA\):](#)**
 - It is a law whereby the **Directorate is mandated to attach the properties of the fugitive economic offenders who have escaped from India warranting arrest** and provide for the confiscation of their properties to the Central Government.
- **Sponsoring agency under COFEPOSA:**
 - Under the **Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA)**, Directorate is empowered to **sponsor cases of preventive detention with regard to contraventions of FEMA**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which one of the following groups of items is included in India's foreign-exchange reserves? (2013)

- (a) Foreign-currency assets, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and loans from foreign countries
- (b) Foreign-currency assets, gold holdings of the RBI and SDRs
- (c) Foreign-currency assets, loans from the World Bank and SDRs
- (d) Foreign-currency assets, gold holdings of the RBI and loans from the World Bank

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

- Foreign Exchange Reserves are assets kept in reserve by a central bank in foreign currencies.
- According to RBI, Foreign Exchange Reserve in India includes:
 - Foreign Currency Assets
 - Gold
 - SDRs
 - Reserve Tranche Position with IMF

- Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

Mains

Q. Discuss how emerging technologies and globalisation contribute to money laundering. Elaborate measures to tackle the problem of money laundering both at national and international levels. **(2021)**

Q. India's proximity to the two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same? **(2018)**

Source: IE

World Hepatitis Day

For Prelims: Hepatitis Day, Hepatotropic Virus, Other Diseases, Hepatitis B

For Mains: Prevalence of Hepatitis at Global and Indian level, Challenges in tackling Hepatitis and how to achieve the global target

Why in News?

World Hepatitis Day is observed each year on 28th July to **enhance awareness of viral hepatitis.**

- The theme for the year 2022 is **“Bringing hepatitis care closer to you”**.
 - It aims to highlight the **need to bring hepatitis care closer to primary health care facilities**, and so communities, to ensure better access to treatment and care.

What do we need to know about Hepatitis?

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

28th July



▪ Hepatitis:

- The word hepatitis refers to any **inflammation of the liver** — the **irritation** or **swelling** of the liver cells from any cause.
- It can be **acute** (inflammation of the liver that presents with sickness — jaundice, fever, vomiting) or **chronic** (inflammation of the liver that lasts more than six months, but essentially showing no symptoms).

▪ Causes:

- Usually caused by a **group of viruses known as the “hepatotropic”** (liver directed) viruses, including A, B, C, D and E.
- Other viruses may also cause it, such as the **varicella virus** that causes **chicken pox**.
 - **SARS-CoV-2**, the virus causing Covid-19 **may injure the liver** too.
- Other causes include **drugs and alcohol abuse, fat buildup in the liver** (fatty liver hepatitis) or an **autoimmune process** in which a person’s body makes **antibodies that attack the liver** (autoimmune hepatitis).
- Hepatitis is the **only communicable disease where mortality is showing an increasing** trend.

▪ Treatment:

- Hepatitis A and E are **self-limiting diseases** (i.e. go away on their own) and require **no specific antiviral medications**.
- For [Hepatitis B](#) and C, **effective medications are available**.

▪ Global Scenario:

- Approximately **354 million people** are suffering from **hepatitis B and C**.
- Southeast Asia has **20% of the global morbidity** burden of hepatitis.
- **About 95% of all hepatitis-related deaths** are due to **cirrhosis and liver cancers** caused by the hepatitis B and C virus.

▪ Indian Scenario:

- **Viral hepatitis, caused by hepatitis viruses A through E**, still remains a major public health problem in India
- India has **“intermediate to high endemicity”** for **Hepatitis B** surface antigen and an estimated **40 million chronic HBV infected people**, constituting approximately **11% of the estimated global burden**.
- **Population prevalence of chronic HBV** infection in India is around 3-4 %.

▪ Challenges:

- Access to healthcare services is often **out of reach for communities** as they are usually available at **centralised/specialised hospitals at a cost which cannot be afforded** by all.
- People continue to die because of **late diagnosis or lack of appropriate treatment**.

Early diagnosis is the gateway for both prevention and successful treatment.

- In the **Southeast Asia region**, only about 10% of people with hepatitis know their status; and of them, only 5% are on treatment.
- Of the estimated 10.5 million people with hepatitis C, just 7% know their status, of which around one in five are on treatment.

What is the Global Target for Hepatitis?

▪ About:

- The Global Target is to **eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.**

▪ How to achieve the Target:

- By 2025, we must **reduce new infections** of hepatitis B and C by 50%, **reduce deaths from liver cancer** by 40%, ensure that 60% of people living with hepatitis B and C **are diagnosed and that half of those eligible receive appropriate treatment.**
- There is a need to **enhance political commitment across all countries** of the region and:
 - Ensure **sustained domestic funding** for hepatitis.
 - **Improve access** to drugs and diagnostics by further reducing prices.
 - Develop **communication strategies** to increase awareness.
 - **Innovate service delivery** to maximise the use of differentiated and **people-centred service delivery options** across HIV and deliver services **according to people's needs** and preferences in line with the primary healthcare approach.
 - **Decentralising** hepatitis care to peripheral health facilities, community-based venues and locations beyond hospital sites brings care nearer to patients' homes.
- An **integrated Regional Action Plan for viral hepatitis, HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infection STIs 2022-2026** is being developed by [WHO](#).
 - This will ensure **effective and efficient utilisation of limited resources** available for the region and will guide countries to adopt a **person-centred approach rather than a disease-specific one.**

Way Forward

- **Clean food and good personal hygiene**, along with access to **safe water and sanitation**, can protect us from hepatitis A and E.
- Measures to prevent hepatitis B and C need to focus on **full coverage with hepatitis B immunisation** including a birth dose, as well as access to **safe blood, safe sex and safe needle usage.**
- **Safe and effective vaccines** exist to prevent hepatitis B, alongside new and powerful antiviral drugs that can manage chronic hepatitis B and cure most cases of hepatitis C.
 - **These interventions together with early diagnosis and awareness campaigns** have the potential to **prevent 4.5 million premature deaths in low- and middle-income countries by 2030 globally.**

Note:

- **Hepatitis B** is included under [India's Universal Immunization Programme \(UIP\)](#) which provides **free of cost vaccination** against eleven (excluding Hepatitis B) vaccine-preventable diseases i.e. **Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Pneumonia and Meningitis due to Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib), Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Rotavirus diarrhoea.**
- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand became the **first four countries in the World Health Organization's Southeast Asia region to have successfully controlled Hepatitis B.**
- Recently, an automated coronavirus testing device named **'COBAS 6800'** was launched which can also **detect viral Hepatitis B & C, among others.**
- It can be noted that only for four diseases viz. **HIV-AIDS (1st December), TB (24th March), Malaria (25th April), and Hepatitis**, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** officially endorses **disease-specific global awareness days.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Which one of the following statements is not correct? (2019)

- (a) Hepatitis B virus is transmitted much like HIV.
- (b) Hepatitis B unlike Hepatitis C, does not have a vaccine.
- (c) Globally, the number of people infected with Hepatitis B and C viruses are several times more than those infected with HIV.
- (d) Some of those infected with Hepatitis B and C viruses do not show the symptoms for many years.

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

- Hepatitis B is a viral infection that attacks the liver and can cause both acute and chronic disease. The virus is transmitted through contact with the blood or other body fluids of an infected person, much like HIV transmission.
- A vaccine against Hepatitis B has been available since 1982. The vaccine is 95% effective in preventing infection and the development of chronic disease and liver cancer, due to which it came to be known as first 'anti-cancer' vaccine.
- According to the WHO data, an estimated 296 million people are living with Hepatitis B, whereas an estimated 58 million people have chronic Hepatitis C infection. There were approximately 37.7 million people living with HIV at the end of 2020 with 1.5 million people becoming newly infected in 2020 globally.
- Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis virus, ranging in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness. The Hepatitis C virus is a blood borne virus and the most common modes of infection are through exposure to small quantities of blood. This may happen through drug use, unsafe injection practices, unsafe health care, and
- the transfusion of unscreened blood and blood products. Sometimes Hepatitis B and C viruses do not show the symptoms for many years.
- Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

[Source: TH](#)

Freebie Culture

For Prelims: Irrational Freebies, Public Distribution System, Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM), Finance Commission

For Mains: Freebies and its implication on Economy

Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme court](#) asked the central government whether distributing irrational freebies during election campaigns is financially viable.

- It also referred to use the expertise of the [Finance Commission](#) in curbing the irrational poll freebies.
- According to [Election Commission of India](#), whether such policies are financially viable or its adverse effect on the economic health of the State is a question that has to be considered and decided by the voters of the State.

What are Freebies?

- [Political parties promise to offer free electricity/water supply, monthly allowance](#) to unemployed, daily wage workers, and women as well as gadgets like laptops, smartphones, etc. in order **to secure the vote of the people.**
 - The states have become habituated to giving freebies, be it in the form of loan waivers or free electricity, cycles, laptops, TV sets, and so on.
- Certain kinds of expenditure that are done under populist pressures or with elections in mind may be questionable.
 - But given that in the last 30 years there has been [rising inequality](#), some kind of **relief to the population in the form of subsidies may not be unjustified** but actually necessary for the economy to continue on its growth path.

Why there is a Need for Freebies?

- **Facilitates Growth:** There are some examples that show that some expenditure outlays do have overall benefits such as the [Public Distribution System, employment guarantee schemes, support for education](#) and **enhanced outlays** for health, particularly during the pandemic.
- **Helps the Lesser Developed States:** With the states that have a comparatively lower level of development with a larger share of the population suffering from poverty, **such kinds of freebies become need/demand-based** and it becomes **essential to offer the people such subsidies for their own upliftment.**
- **Essential for Fulfilling Expectations:** In a country like India where the states have (or don't have) a certain level of development, upon the emergence of the elections, there are **expectations from the part of people which are met by such promises** of freebies.
- **Helps Lesser Developed States:** The states which lack development, **freebies become need/demand-based** and it becomes **essential to offer the people such subsidies for their own upliftment.**

What are the Drawbacks of Freebies?

- **Macroeconomically Unstable:** Freebies undercut the basic framework of macroeconomic stability, the politics of freebies distorts expenditure priorities and outlays remain concentrated on subsidies of one kind or the other.
- **Impact on States' Fiscal Situation:** Offering freebies, ultimately, have an impact on the public exchequer and most of the states of India do not have robust financial health and often have very limited resources in terms of revenue.
- **Against Free and Fair Election:** The promise of irrational freebies from public funds before elections unduly influences the voters, disturbs the level playing field, and vitiates the purity of the poll process.
- **A Step Away from the Environment:** When the freebies are about giving free power, it would lead to overuse of natural resources and focus from renewable energy system will also get distracted.

Way Forward

- **Realizing Economic Impacts of Freebies:** It is not about how cheap the freebies are but how expensive they are for the economy, life quality, and social cohesion in the long run.
 - We must strive instead for a race to efficiency through laboratories of democracy and sanguine federalism where states use their authority to harness innovative ideas and solutions to common problems which other states can emulate.
- **Differentiating Subsidies and Freebies:** There is a need to **understand the impacts of**

freebies from the economic sense and connect it with the taxpayer's money.

- It is also essential to distinguish between subsidies and freebies as subsidies are the justified and specifically targeted benefits that arise out of demands.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q Consider the following actions by the Government: (2010)

1. Cutting the tax rates
2. Increasing the government spending
3. Abolishing the subsidies in the context of economic recession,

which of the above actions can be considered a part of the “fiscal stimulus” package?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- **An increase in public spending or a reduction in the level of taxation might be done by a government in order to encourage and support economic growth.** Most government bailout packages offered to various businesses can be considered a form of fiscal stimulus. **Hence, 1 and 2 are correct.**
- A ‘stimulus’ is an attempt by policymakers to kick start a sluggish economy through a package of measures. A ‘monetary stimulus’ will see the central bank expanding the money supply or reducing the cost of money (interest rates) to spur consumer spending. A ‘fiscal stimulus’ entails the Government spending more from its own coffers or slashing tax rates to put more money in the hands of consumers.
- Abolition of subsidies is a part of rationalizing the expenditure side of the government. This is a step towards fiscal consolidation rather than fiscal stimulus. Hence, 3 is not correct. **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. In what way could the replacement of price subsidy with direct benefit Transfer (DBT) change the scenario of subsidies in India? Discuss. **(2015)**

Source: TH

National Anti-Doping Bill, 2021

For Prelims: Doping, NADA, WADA

For Mains: Provisions of National Anti-Doping Bill 2021 and Related Issues

Why in News?

Recently, the [Lok Sabha](#) passed the National Anti-Doping Bill 2021 Bill that seeks to create a **statutory framework for the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)**.

- Piloted by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, it was first introduced in Lok Sabha in December 2021.
- The bill will **protect the interest of sportspersons** as it will provide ample space for them to put forth their versions especially when they face anti-doping charges.

What are the Key Features of the Bill?

- **Prohibition of Doping:**
 - The Bill prohibits athletes, athlete support personnel and other persons from engaging in doping in sport.
- **Consequences of Violations:**
 - Anti-doping rule violation may result in **disqualification of results including forfeiture of medals, points, and prizes**, ineligibility to participate in a competition or event for a prescribed period, financial sanctions etc.
- **Statutory Backing for National Anti-Doping Agency:**
 - The Bill provides for constituting this National Anti-Doping Agency as a statutory body.
 - It will be headed by a **Director General appointed by the central government**. Functions of the Agency include,
 - Planning, implementing, and monitoring anti-doping activities,
 - Investigating anti-doping rule violations,
 - Promoting anti-doping research.
- **National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports:**
 - The Bill establishes a **National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports** to make recommendations to the government on anti-doping regulation and compliance with international commitments on anti-doping.
 - The Board will **oversee the activities of the Agency and issue directions to it**.
- **Dope Testing Laboratories:**
 - The existing National Dope Testing Laboratory **will be deemed to be the principal dope testing laboratory**.
 - The central government may establish more National Dope Testing Laboratories.

What is the Significance of the Bill?

- The bill **attempts to achieve, time-bound justice to athletes**, apart from enhancing cooperation among agencies in fighting doping.
- It is also an **attempt to reinforce India's commitment to fulfil international obligations for clean sports**.
- The bill would **help in establishing a robust, independent mechanism for anti-doping adjudication**.
- The bill also would lend legal sanctity to the functioning of NADA and National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL).

What are the Issues with the Bill?

- The **qualifications of the Director General are not specified in the Bill** and are left to be notified through Rules.
- The central government **may remove the Director General from the office on grounds of misbehavior or incapacity** or "such other ground".
- Leaving these provisions to the discretion of the central government **may affect the independence of the Director General**.

- This also goes against the mandate of the World Anti-Doping Agency that such bodies must be independent in their operations.
- Under the Bill, the **Board has powers to remove the members of the Disciplinary Panel and Appeal Panel** on grounds which will be specified by regulations and are not specified in the Bill.
- Further, there is **no requirement to give them an opportunity of being heard**. This may affect the independent functioning of these panels.

What is Doping and Related Agencies?

▪ About:

- Consumption of **certain prohibited substances** by athletes to enhance performance.

▪ NADA:

- National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) was set up as a registered society **under the Societies Registration Act of 1860** on 24th November, 2005 with a mandate for Dope free sports in India.
- The primary objectives are **to implement anti-doping rules as per [WADA \(World Anti-Doping Agency\) code](#)**, regulate dope control programme, to promote education and research and creating awareness about doping and its ill effects.
- The NADA has the **necessary authority and responsibility for:**
 - Planning, coordinating, implementing, monitoring and advocating improvements in Doping Control,
 - Cooperating with other relevant national organisations, agencies and other Anti-Doping Organisations etc.

▪ WADA:

- In November, 1999 the **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)** was set up under the International Olympic Committee.
- WADA is recognised by the **UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport (2005)**.
- WADA's primary role is to develop, harmonise, and coordinate anti-doping regulations across all sports and countries.
- It does so by ensuring proper implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code (WADA Code) and its standards, conducting investigations into doping incidents, conducting research on doping, and educating sportspersons and related personnel on anti-doping regulations.

[Source: IE](#)

Startups

For Prelims: Startups, Startup India Action Plan, National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI), Promoting and Accelerating Young and Aspiring Innovators and Startups (PRAYAS), Atal Innovation Mission

For Mains: Startup Ecosystem and its Significance

Why in News?

Various reforms and initiatives by the Government have led to booming of the [Indian Startup ecosystem](#).

What are Startups?

▪ About:

- The term startup refers to a company in the first stages of operations. Startups are founded by one or more entrepreneurs who want to develop a product or service for which they believe there is demand.
- These companies generally start with high costs and limited revenue, which is why they look for capital from a variety of sources such as venture capitalists.

▪ Growth of Startups in India:

- The [Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade \(DPIIT\)](#) has recognized startups which are spread across 56 diversified sectors.
 - More than 4,500 Startups have been recognized in sectors relating to emerging technologies such as [Internet of Things \(IoT\)](#), [robotics](#), [artificial intelligence](#), analytics, etc.
- Sustained Government efforts in this direction have **resulted in increasing the number of recognized Startups from 471 in 2016 to 72,993 in 2022.**

How Startup-India Scheme has Facilitated the Growth of Startups in India?

- Various programs undertaken by the Government of India to promote startups under Startup India initiative has facilitated this growth:
- **Startup India Action Plan:** It comprises of 19 action items spanning across areas such as Simplification and handholding, Funding support and incentives and Industry- academia partnership and incubation.
 - The Action Plan laid the **foundation of Government support, schemes and incentives envisaged to create a vibrant startup ecosystem in the country.**
- **Startup India Hub:** It is a one of its kind **online platforms for all stakeholders of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in India to discover, connect and engage with each other.**
 - The Online Hub hosts Startups, Investors, Funds, Mentors, Academic Institutions, Incubators, Accelerators, Corporates, Government Bodies and more.
- **Income Tax Exemption for 3 years:** Startups incorporated on or after 1st April 2016 Ministerial Board Certificate are exempted from income-tax for a period of 3 consecutive years out of 10 years since incorporation.
- **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS):** It aims to provide financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization.
- **International Market Access to Indian Startups:** Startup India has launched bridges with over 15 countries (**Brazil, Sweden, Russia, Portugal, UK, Finland, Netherlands, Singapore, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Croatia, Qatar and UAE**) providing a soft- landing platform for startups from the partner nations and aid in promoting cross collaboration.

What Other Factors have Provided Handholding to Startups?

▪ Government Schemes:

- **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** had launched an **umbrella programme** called [National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations \(NIDHI\)](#) for nurturing ideas and innovations (knowledge-based and technology-driven) into successful startups,
- [Promoting and Accelerating Young and Aspiring Innovators and Startups \(PRAYAS\)](#) program was launched for providing financial support to startups.

▪ Enhancing Biotechnology:

- To foster **biotechnology innovation**, the Department of Biotechnology, through the **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)**, promotes and nurtures biotechnology firms.

▪ Defense Sector:

- The **Department of Defense Production** launched the [Innovations for Defence Excellence \(iDEX\)](#) programme to achieve self-reliance and foster innovation and technology development in defence and aerospace by engaging industries, R&D institutes, and academia and providing them with grants to carry out R&D.

▪ **Atal Innovation Mission:**

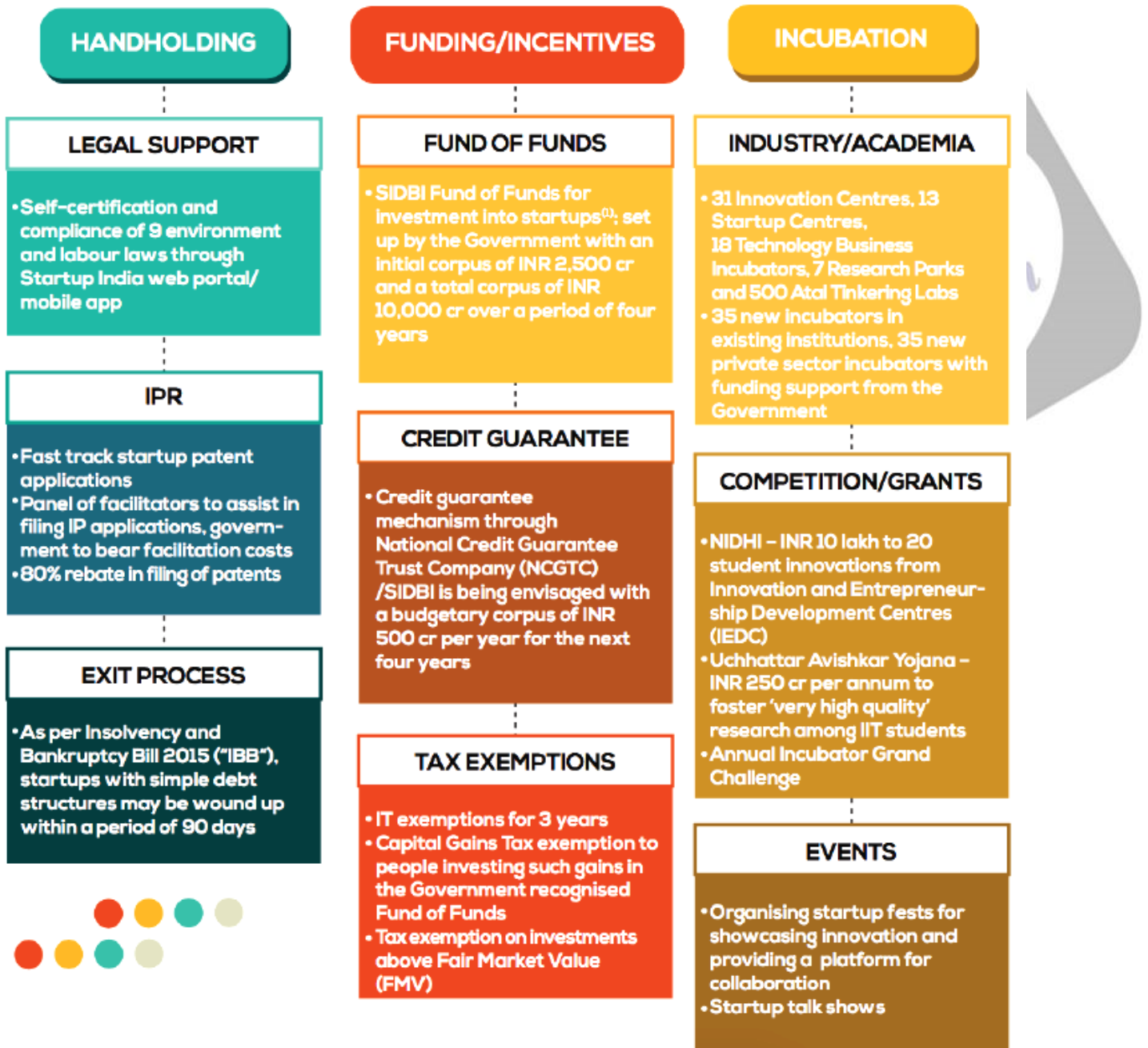
- Under the [Atal Innovation Mission](#), the Government has set up Atal Incubation Centres (AIC) to incubate startups in various sectors.
- It has also launched [Atal New India Challenge \(ANIC\)](#) program to directly aid startups with technology-based innovations that solve sectoral challenges of national importance and societal relevance.

▪ **Role of Forex Flow:**

- **The inflow of forex especially from leading tech companies** such as Facebook, Google, and Microsoft into the Indian start-up ecosystem signals the immense potential of the domestic market.

▪ **Role of Technology:**

- With the rise of new technological tools, the startup community is leveraging new-age technologies such as **artificial intelligence**, [internet of things](#), **data analytics**, [big data](#), [robotics](#), etc., to **bridge wide-ranging gaps** that were introduced in the market.



Way Forward

- There is need to **create awareness about startups** as many enterprising people continue to be

discouraged from pursuing their hobbies by their families and social environments and are under pressure to select a job and lifestyle that is seen to provide more stability.

- The **willingness to take chances should be rewarded more**, and failure should not be seen negatively.
 - Furthermore, **breaking prejudices** is a critical step toward increasing diversity, which would enable today's big ideas to receive the ecosystem of support they require to succeed.
- The nation's policymakers, risk-taking corporates and funding agencies need to **foster a conducive climate** for ensuring **easier availability of domestic capital**.
 - The **regulators have to play a more proactive role** in formulating appropriate regulations that **encourage innovation and support emerging business models**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. What does venture capital mean? (2014)

- (a) A short-term capital provided to industries
- (b) A long-term start-up capital provided to new entrepreneurs
- (c) Funds provided to industries at times of incurring losses
- (d) Funds provided for replacement and renovation of industries

Ans: (b)

EXP:

- Venture capital is a form of fund for a new or growing business. It usually comes from venture capital firms that specialize in building high risk financial portfolios.
- With venture capital, the venture capital firm gives funding to the **startup company in exchange for equity in the startup**.
- The people who invest this money are called venture capitalists (VCs). Venture capital investment is also referred as risk capital or patient risk capital, as it includes the risk of losing the money if the venture does not succeed and takes a medium to long term period for the investments to fructify. **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

[Source: PIB](#)

Human-Animal Conflict

For Prelims: Human-Animal conflict, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

For Mians: Human-Animal Conflict and its Implications

Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of State for Forest, Environment and Climate Change, informed in the [Lok Sabha](#) that there is a rise in the number of [Human-Animal conflicts](#).

What is Human-Animal Conflict?

▪ About:

- It refers to struggles that arise when the presence or behavior of **wildlife poses actual or perceived direct, recurring threats to human interests or needs**, often leading to disagreements between groups of people and negative impacts on people and/or wildlife.

▪ Causes:

- Habitat loss
- Growth of the population of wild animals
- Changing cropping patterns that attract wild animals to farmlands
- Movement of wild animals from forests area to human-dominated landscapes for food and fodder
- Movement of human beings to forests for illegal collection of forest produce
- Habitat degradation due to the growth of invasive alien species, etc.

▪ Impacts:

- Loss of life
- Injury to both animal and human
- Damage of crops and agriculture land
- Rise in violence against animals

▪ Related Data:

- There were 222 elephants were killed by electrocution across the country between 2018-19 and 2020-21.
- Further, 29 tigers were killed by poaching between 2019 and 2021, while 197 tiger deaths are under scrutiny.
- Among human casualties of conflict with animals, **elephants killed 1,579 humans in three years** — 585 in 2019-20, 461 in 2020-21, and 533 in 2021-22.
 - Odisha topped the number of deaths with 332, followed by Jharkhand with 291, and West Bengal with 240.
- Whereas, **Tigers killed 125 humans in reserves between 2019 and 2021.**
 - Maharashtra accounted for nearly half these deaths, at 61.

What are the Initiatives Taken to Tackle the Conflict?

- **Advisory for Management of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC):** This has been issued by the Standing Committee of the [National Board of Wildlife](#) (SC-NBWL).
 - **Empower Gram Panchayats:** The advisory envisages empowering gram panchayats in dealing with problematic wild animals as per the [WildLife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#).
 - **Provide Insurance:** Utilising add-on coverage under the [Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna](#) for crop compensation against crop damage due to HWC.
 - **Augmenting Fodder:** Envisages augmenting fodder and water sources within the forest areas.
 - **Take Proactive Measures:** Prescribes **inter-departmental committees** at the local/state level, adoption of **early warning systems, creation of barriers, dedicated circle-wise Control Rooms** with toll-free hotline numbers, Identification of hotspots, etc.
 - **Provide Instant Relief:** Payment of a portion of ex-gratia as interim relief within 24 hours of the incident to the victim/family.

Way Forward

- The most widespread methods for lessening human-wildlife conflict come in the form of mitigation, or finding ways to keep wildlife out of areas with high human population or agricultural density.
- There is a need for education and awareness among the masses so that they are sensitized about the human-animal conflict, Then, mitigation will evolve away from short-term symptom fixes towards long-term sustainable solutions to prevent conflict.
- Ensuring that humans and animals have adequate space to thrive is the basis of human-wildlife conflict resolution.
- Protecting wild lands and natural habitats is key, but so is creating buffer zones between wild and urban areas.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements in respect of Trade Related Analysis of Fauna and Flora in Commerce (TRAFFIC): (2017)

1. TRAFFIC is a bureau under United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
2. The mission of TRAFFIC is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Trade Related Analysis of Fauna and Flora in Commerce (TRAFFIC), the wildlife trade monitoring network, is a joint program of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and IUCN - the International Union for Conservation of Nature. It was founded in 1976. It is not a bureau under UNEP. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- **TRAFFIC works to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- TRAFFIC focuses on leveraging resources, expertise and awareness of the latest globally urgent species trade issues such as tiger parts, elephant ivory and rhino horn. Large scale commercial trade in commodities like timber and fisheries products is also addressed and linked to work on developing rapid results and policy improvements. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

[Source: IE](#)

Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES Scheme)

Why in News?

Recently, the central government has released Rs 206 crore to states for the promotion of exports under the [Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme \(TIES\) initiative](#).

- Under the TIES, financial assistance for 27 export infrastructure projects have been approved during FY 2019-20 to 2022-23.

What is Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)?

- **About:**
 - **Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry** launched the Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) in 2017.

- After delinking the **Assistance to States for Development of Export Infrastructure and Allied Activities (ASIDE) Scheme** in 2015, the State Governments had been consistently requesting the support of the Centre in creation of export infrastructure.

▪ **Objective:**

- To assist Central and State Government agencies in the creation of appropriate infrastructure for the growth of exports.

▪ **Scope:**

- The scheme can be availed by States through their implementing agencies, for infrastructure projects with significant export linkages like **Border Haats, Land customs stations, quality testing and certification labs, cold chains, trade promotion centres, export warehousing and packaging, SEZs and ports/airports cargo terminuses.**

▪ **Extent of Financial Assistance:**

- The Central Government assistance for infrastructure creation will be in the form of **grant-in-aid**, normally not more than the equity being put in by the implementing agency or **50% of the total equity in the project.**
 - In the case of projects located in **North Eastern States, Himalayan States** including **UT of J&K, Ladakh** this grant can be up to **80% of total equity.**

▪ **Negative List of Projects that will not be Considered under this Scheme:**

- Projects which are covered under sector specific schemes like **textiles, electronics, IT.**
- General infrastructure projects like **highways, power etc.**
- Projects where an overwhelming export linkage cannot be established.

Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)

Department of Commerce was earlier working with states to fill infrastructure gaps through ASIDE.

As per 14th Finance Commission recommendations, tax devolution to states increased from 32% to 42%, thus delinking ASIDE from support of the Centre.

TIES launched to strengthen export infrastructure in March 2017.

Central Government funding normally not more than the equity put in by implementing agency or 50% of total project equity (80% for Northeastern & Himalayan states including J&K).



Scheme to help export-linked infrastructure projects like:

- Border Haats
- Land customs stations
- Quality testing and certification labs
- Cold chains
- Trade Promotion centres
- Dry Ports
- Export warehousing and packaging
- SEZs and ports/airports cargo terminuses

[Source: PIB](#)

Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the [Lok Sabha](#) passed the **Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2022** that seeks to amend the **Family Courts Act, 1984** to establish **family courts in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland**.

What is the Family Courts Act 1984?

- **Establishment of Family Courts:**
 - **The Family Courts Act, 1984** was enacted for the establishment of **Family Courts** with a view to **promote conciliation, and secure speedy settlement** of disputes relating to [marriage](#) and family affairs and for related matters.
- **Appointment of Judges:**
 - **The State Government** may, with the concurrence of the [High Court](#), appoint one or more persons to be the **Judge or Judges of a Family Court**.
- **Association of Social Welfare Agencies:**
 - **The State Government** may provide with a Family Court of:
 - **Institutions or organisations** engaged in [social welfare](#).
 - **Persons** professionally engaged in **promoting the welfare of the family**.
 - **Persons** working in the field of **social welfare**.
 - **Any other person** whose association with a Family Court would enable it to **exercise its jurisdiction more effectively** in accordance with the purposes of this Act.

What is the Family Courts (Amendment) Bill?

- It seeks to provide for the **establishment of Family Courts in the State of Himachal Pradesh** with effect from the 15th February, 2019 and in the **State of Nagaland** with effect from the 12th September, 2008
- It also seeks to insert a new **Section 3A** to **retrospectively validate** all actions under the said Act taken by the State Government of Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland and the Family Courts of those states prior to the commencement of the **Family Courts (Amendment) Act, 2022**.
- According to the bill, all orders of appointment of a family court judge, and the posting, promotion or transfer of such a judge under the Act will also be valid in the two States.

What was the Need for the Amendment?

- There are **715 Family Courts** which are **established and functioning in 26 States and Union territories**, including **three Family Courts in the State of Himachal Pradesh and two-Family Courts in the State of Nagaland**.
 - However, for Himachal and Nagaland, the Central Government notification was **not issued for bringing the said Act into force in these states**.
- The issue of **lack of jurisdiction of Family Courts** in the State of Himachal Pradesh has been challenged before the High Court of Himachal Pradesh.
 - It was stated that as the **Central Government has not issued any notification** to extend the jurisdiction of Family Courts in the State of Himachal Pradesh, such Courts are functioning **without jurisdiction and anything done or any action taken** under the said Act appears to be **void ab initio** (Having no legal effect from inception).
- The family courts in **Nagaland too were operating without any legal authority since 2008**.

[Source: IE](#)

