

# OFFICERS' PULSE

Issue no. 30 | 19th December to 25th December, 2021



WE BECOME  
WHAT WE  
THINK

AT A GLANCE  
& IN DEPTH.

## COVERAGE.

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**CURRENT AFFAIRS WEEKLY**  
THE **PULSE** OF UPSC AT YOUR FINGER TIPS



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# News @ a glance

## POLITY

### 1) Rare Diseases

#### What is a rare disease?

- A rare disease is a health condition of **low prevalence that affects a small number of people** compared with other prevalent diseases in the general population.
- Rare diseases include genetic diseases, rare cancers, infectious tropical diseases and degenerative diseases.
- **80% of rare diseases are genetic in origin** and hence disproportionately impact children.

#### Definition of a rare disease

- There is **no universally accepted definition** of rare disease.
- These diseases have **differing definitions** in various countries and range from those that are prevalent in 1 in 10,000 of the population to 6 per 10,000. According to the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** registry definition, "A disease or disorder is defined as Rare in India when it **affects fewer than 1 in 2500 individuals**".
- So far about 450 rare diseases have been recorded in India and it is estimated that about 6-8% of the country's population is affected by a rare disease.

#### Challenges associated with rare diseases

- There are 7,000-8,000 classified rare diseases, but **less than 5% have therapies available to treat them**. About 95% rare diseases have no approved treatment and less than 1 in 10 patients receive disease-specific treatment.
- The field of rare diseases is very complex and heterogeneous and prevention, treatment and management of rare diseases have multiple challenges. **Early diagnosis** of rare diseases is a major challenge owing to a variety of factors that include **lack of awareness among primary care physicians, lack of adequate screening and diagnostic facilities etc.**

- There are also fundamental challenges in the **research and development** for the majority of rare diseases as relatively little is known about the pathophysiology or the natural history of these diseases particularly in the Indian context.
- Rare diseases are also **difficult to research upon** as the patients pool is very small and it often results in inadequate clinical experience. **Availability and accessibility to medicines** are also important to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with rare disease.
- The **cost of treatment of rare diseases is prohibitively expensive**. Various High Courts and the Supreme Court have also expressed concern about lack of a national policy for rare diseases.

#### Why in News?

- In order to provide facilities for treatment and care of patients suffering from rare diseases, eight Centres of Excellence have been notified, which are premier Government tertiary hospitals with facilities for diagnosis, prevention and treatment of rare diseases.

### 2) Intensified Mission Indradhanush

#### Background

- The Immunization Programme in India was introduced in **1978** as the '**Expanded Programme of Immunization**' (EPI) by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- In 1985, the programme was modified as '**Universal Immunization Programme**' (UIP) to be implemented in a phased manner to cover all districts in the country.
- Under UIP, immunization is providing free of cost against 12 vaccine preventable diseases:
  1. Nationally against 9 diseases - **Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles,**

**Rubella, severe form of Childhood Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B and Meningitis & Pneumonia caused by Hemophilus Influenza type B**

2. Sub-nationally against 3 diseases - **Rotavirus, Pneumococcal Pneumonia and Japanese Encephalitis**; of which Rotavirus vaccine and Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine are in process of expansion while JE vaccine is provided only in endemic districts.
  - A child is said to be fully immunized if the child receives all due vaccines as per national immunization schedule within the 1st year age of child.
  - Every year the Universal Immunization Programme caters to the vaccination needs of 2.65 crore children and 2.9 crore pregnant women against these 12 Vaccine Preventable Diseases. Despite these efforts by all the States and UTs, some children and pregnant women get missed out from this network.
  - **Mission Indradhanush** was launched by the government to **reach out to every dropped out and left out child and pregnant woman.**

**Mission Indradhanush**

- To strengthen and re-energize the Universal Immunization Programme and **achieve full immunization coverage** for all children and pregnant women at a rapid pace, the Government of India launched "Mission Indradhanush" in 2014.
- **Goal of Mission Indradhanush**
- The ultimate goal of Mission Indradhanush is to ensure full immunization with all available vaccines for **children up to two years of age and pregnant women.**
- The Government has identified 201 high focus districts across 28 states in the country that have the highest number of partially immunized and unimmunized children.
- Earlier the increase in **full immunization coverage** was 1% per year which has **increased to 6.7% per year** through the first two phases of Mission Indradhanush.
- Four phases of Mission Indradhanush have been conducted till 2017 and more than 2.53 crore children and 68 lakh pregnant women have been vaccinated.

**Intensified Mission Indradhanush**

- To further **intensify the immunization programme**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) in 2017.
- Through this programme, Government of India aims to reach each and every child up to two years of age and all those pregnant women who have been **left uncovered under the routine immunisation programme/UIP.**
- Special attention was given to unserved/low coverage pockets in sub-centre and urban slums with migratory populations.

**IMI 2.0**

- It was launched in 2019 to ensure reaching the unreached with all available vaccines and accelerate the coverage of children and pregnant women in the identified districts and blocks.

**IMI 3.0**

- In February 2012, the government launched Intensified Mission Indradhanush in **pre-identified 250 districts/urban areas** across 29 States/UTs in the country.
- IMI 3.0 will build on the gains of previous phases of the campaign and make lasting gains towards Universal Immunization. It will target achieving **90% Full Immunization Coverage (FIC) in all districts** of the country.
- Focus of the IMI 3.0 will be the **children and pregnant women who have missed their vaccine doses during the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- Beneficiaries from **migration areas and hard to reach areas** will be targeted as they may have missed their vaccine doses during COVID19.

**Why in News?**

- Under Mission Indradhanush, full immunization coverage among children aged 12 to 23 months has reached 76.4 per cent.

**3) Good Governance Index**

**What's in the news?**

- The Government of India has released the Good Governance Index 2021 prepared by DARPG on Good Governance Day (25th December).

**About the Index**

- Good Governance Index (GGI) 2021 Framework covered **ten sectors and 58 indicators**.
- The sectors of GGI 2020-21 are 1) Agriculture and Allied Sectors, 2) Commerce & Industries, 3) Human Resource Development, 4) Public Health, 5.) Public Infrastructure & Utilities, 6) Economic Governance, 7) Social Welfare & Development, 8) Judicial & Public Security, 9) Environment, and 10) Citizen-Centric Governance.
- The GGI 2020-21 categorises States and UTs into **four categories**, i.e., (i) Other States – Group A; (ii) Other States – Group B; (iii) North-East and Hill States; and (iv) Union Territories.

#### **Highlights of the Index**

- **Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa** top the composite rank score covering 10 sectors. GGI 2021 says that Gujarat registered 12.3 percent increase and Goa registered 24.7 percent increase over GGI 2019 indicators.

- In the North-East and Hill States category, **Mizoram and Jammu and Kashmir** have registered an overall increase of 10.4% and 3.7% respectively over GGI 2019.
- In the Union Territories category, **Delhi** tops the composite rank registering a 14 percent increase over the GGI 2019 indicators. Delhi has performed strongly in Agriculture & Allied Sectors, Commerce & Industry, Public Infrastructure and Utilities and Social Welfare & Development.
- **20 States have improved their composite GGI scores over the GGI 2019 index scores.** The sector-wise scores attained by the States and UT's indicate strong performance in one or the other sector. This indicates that overall governance in the States of India is moving in the positive direction.

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# ENVIRONMENT

## 1) Himalayan Glaciers melting at Exceptional Rate: Study

### What's the news?

- According to a recent study, glaciers in the Himalayas are melting at an **"exceptional" rate because of global warming**, threatening the water supply of millions of people in Asia.

### Key highlights

- The **Himalayan mountain range** is home to the world's **third-largest amount of glacier ice**, after Antarctica and the Arctic and is often referred to as '**the Third Pole**'.
- The researchers found that the Himalayan glaciers have **lost ice ten times more quickly over the last few decades** than on average since the last major glacier expansion 400-700 years ago, a period known as the **Little Ice Age**.
- The study also shows that Himalayan glaciers are **shrinking** far more rapidly than glaciers in other parts of the world.
- Eg: A team led by researchers at the University of Leeds, UK, made a reconstruction of the size and ice surfaces of 14,798 Himalayan glaciers during the Little Ice Age and calculated that the glaciers have lost around **40 per cent of their area**, shrinking from a peak of 28,000 square kilometres (km<sup>2</sup>) to around 19,600 km<sup>2</sup> today.
- The water released through that melting has **raised sea levels** across the world by between 0.92 millimetres (mm) and 1.38 mm.

- The researchers found that **acceleration in the rate of loss** has only emerged within the last few decades, and **coincides with human-induced climate change**.
- The acceleration of melting of Himalayan glaciers has significant implications for **hundreds of millions of people who depend on Asia's major river systems** for food and energy and these rivers include the **Brahmaputra, Ganges and Indus**.
- The Himalayan glaciers are generally losing mass faster in the **eastern regions, taking in east Nepal and Bhutan north of the main divide**.
- The study suggests this variation is probably due to **differences in geographical features** on the two sides of the mountain range and their interaction with the atmosphere resulting in **different weather patterns**.
- Researchers emphasised that Himalayan glaciers are also declining faster where **they end in lakes**, which have **several warming effects**, rather than where they end on land as the number and size of these **lakes are increasing** so **continued acceleration in mass loss** can be expected.
- Glaciers which have significant amounts of **natural debris** upon their surfaces are also **losing mass more quickly**, contributing around **46.5** per cent of total volume loss despite making up only around **7.5 per cent of the total number of glaciers**.

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# ECONOMY

## 1) Vernacular Innovation Program

### What's in the news?

- Niti Aayog has launched the first of its kind Vernacular Innovation Program under the **Atal Innovation Mission** which aims to **enable innovators and entrepreneurs to have access to the innovative ecosystem in 22 mother tongue languages.**
- By providing access to learning in one's language and culture, the programme aims to **create equal opportunity for the vernacular innovators.**
- To build the necessary capacity for the Vernacular Innovation Program, Atal Innovation Mission has identified and will be training a **Vernacular Task Force** in each of the 22 scheduled languages. Each task force comprises vernacular language teachers, subject experts, technical writers, and the leadership of regional Atal Incubation Centres.

### About Atal Innovation Mission

- The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is a flagship initiative set up by the **NITI Aayog** to **promote innovation and entrepreneurship across the length and breadth of the country.**
- AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation ecosystem of the country.

### Initiatives under Atal Innovation Mission

#### Atal Tinkering Labs - at School Level

- Over the last two years, AIM has launched the establishment of thousands of Atal Tinkering Labs enabling students from **grade 6 to grade 12** to have access to and tinker with innovative tools and technologies like 3D printers, robotics, miniaturised electronics do-it-yourself kits, thus stimulating a problem solving innovative mindset to solve problems in the community they are in.
- Some activities related to ATL Operational Excellence, Proactive Promotion of

Innovation & Thought Leadership, Collaborations & Partnerships and New Initiatives by AIM:

- **ATL Gandhian Challenge** - launched in all schools along with UNICEF.
- **India Stamp Creativity challenge** - launched with UNICEF and India Post.

#### Atal Incubators at Universities, Institutions, Industry Level

- To promote creation of a supporting ecosystem for start-ups and entrepreneurs, AIM has been establishing world-class incubators called Atal Incubation Centres (AICs) in universities, Institutions, corporates, etc. that would foster innovative start-ups and become scalable and sustainable enterprises.
- Some activities related to AIC Operational Excellence, Proactive Promotion of Innovation & Thought Leadership, Collaborations & Partnerships and New Initiatives by AIM:
  - **Youth-CoLab Sustainable Innovation Challenge** along with UNDP-based on Gandhian Values.
  - **UNLEASH Startups Challenge** with Netherlands embassy support.

#### Atal Community Innovation Centres - Serving Unserved and Under-Served Regions of India

- To promote the benefits of technology led innovation to the unserved/ underserved regions of India including Tier 2, Tier 3 cities, aspirational districts, tribal, hilly and coastal areas, AIM is setting up Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) with a unique partnership driven model wherein AIM would **grant up to Rs. 2.5 crore** to an ACIC subject to a partner proving equal or greater matching funding.

#### Atal New India Challenges - Product and Service Innovations with National Impact

- To create product and service innovations having national socio-economic impact, AIM has launched over 24 Atal New India Challenges in partnership with five different ministries and departments of the central government.

**Applied Research and Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE) - to Stimulate MSME Industry Innovation**

- To promote innovation in a phased manner in the MSME/Start-up sector AIM will be launching ARISE along with partner Ministries so that great research ideas are converted to viable innovative prototypes followed by product development and commercial deployment.

**Mentorship and Partnerships - with Public, Private sector, NGOs, Academia, Institutions**

- To enable all the initiatives to succeed, AIM has launched the “**Mentor India - The Mentors of Change**” programme, in collaboration with the public sector, corporates and institutions, to support all the initiatives of the mission.
- It is a strategic nation building initiative to engage leaders who can guide and mentor students in Atal Tinkering Labs.

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# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## 1) India-Central Asia dialogue

### What's in the news?

- India recently hosted the third India-Central Asia dialogue which saw participation of the Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

### Highlights of the Dialogue

- A joint statement issued at the end of deliberations said it was **important to provide immediate humanitarian aid for Afghans**.
- The Central Asia dialogue comes a month after National Security Adviser Ajit Doval hosted five counterparts from the region for a security dialogue focusing on Afghanistan.
- Ministers noted that there is a **broad regional consensus** on the issues related to Afghanistan, which includes formation of a truly representative and inclusive government, combating terrorism and drug trafficking, central role of the UN, providing immediate humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people and preserving the rights of women, children and other national ethnic groups.

### 4 Cs

- While none of the countries recognise the Taliban, only Tajikistan has taken a strong stand against any bilateral contacts with the group after it took control of Afghanistan in August.
- The dialogue also discussed how to increase links in the "4 C's" of **Commerce, Capacity enhancement, Connectivity and Contacts**. **India-Central Asia trade** is quite small at present, accounting for less than \$2 billion, most of which comes from Kazakh oil exports to India.
- Given Pakistan's block on land trade from India, the countries determined to make more use of the sea route via **Chabahar**, which is connected to Central Asian countries by road and rail through Iran, as well as the **International North South Transit Corridor (INSTC)** that goes via the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas.

- The dialogue also decided to explore establishing joint working groups to address issues of free movements of goods and services between India and Central Asian countries.

## 2) Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

### About OIC

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the **second largest inter-governmental organization** after the United Nations with a membership of **57 states**.
- The majority of its member states are Muslim-majority countries, while others have significant Muslim populations, including several African and South American countries.
- India is neither a member nor an observer of the OIC.**
- The organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world to ensure and safeguard their interest on economic socio and political areas.
- Under its charter, the OIC aims at promoting **Islamic solidarity and co-operation** among its Member and Observer States in the political, economic, social, cultural, humanitarian, scientific and related spheres.
- The OIC has **observer status at the United Nations**, on a reciprocal basis, and it cooperates with the United Nations in all areas of concern, including support to the Governments of Member States in their efforts to promote the economic and social development of their countries and peoples.
- Its Headquarters is in **Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**.

### Why in News?

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation held a meeting recently in Islamabad.

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# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## 1) Agni-P

### Why in News:

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully **tested** the new-generation nuclear-capable ballistic missile **Agni Prime (Agni-P)**.

### About Agni-P

- Agni-P is a **new generation advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles**. It is a **canisterised missile** with range capability between **1,000 and 2,000 km**.
  - Agni-P has **improved** parameters including **manoeuvring and accuracy**.
  - Agni-P is a **two-stage canisterised solid propellant ballistic missile**.
1. **Canisterisation** of missiles **reduces the time** required to **launch the missile** while **improving its storage and mobility**.
  2. Canister-based launch system—serves as a transporting container, a shelter to store in a ship, and gives operational flexibility.

### Agni Class of Missiles

- **Agni** class of missiles are the mainstay of India's nuclear launch capability which also includes the Prithvi short range ballistic missiles, submarine launched ballistic missiles and fighter aircraft. The **longest of the Agni series, Agni-V, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km**.
- In the last few years, India has also operationalized its submarine-based nuclear launch capability, **completing the nuclear triad**.
- This is especially important given India's No-First-Use policy while reserving the

right of massive retaliation if struck with nuclear weapons first.

## 2) Chillai Kalan

### What is it?

- **Chillai Kalan** is a **Persian term which means 'major cold'**.
  - It is a **traditional 40-day long period of extreme cold in Kashmir** starting from 21 December to January 29 every year, **followed by Chillai-Khurud and Chillai-Bachha**.
1. **Chillai Khurud (small cold)** is a 20-day long period that occurs between January 30 and February 18
  2. **Chillai-Bachha (baby cold)**, a 10-day long period which is from February 19 to February 28.
- **Chillai Kalan**, considered the **heart of winter**, typically **brings snowfall, sub-zero temperatures**, and the **freezing of water bodies**, and the shutdown of roadways.
  - It is said the snow during the period lasts longer and **replenishes the streams, rivers and lakes of Kashmir**.

### Why in News:

- Kashmir's 40-day harshest spell of winter, locally called 'chillai kalan', has started with the minimum temperature already sub-zero in the entire Valley.

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# ART AND CULTURE

## 1) Red Fort

### About



- The Red Fort Complex was **built as the palace fort of Shahjahanabad – the new capital of the fifth Mughal Emperor of India, Shah Jahan**. Shah Jahan, after ruling from Agra for eleven years, decided to shift to Delhi and **laid the foundation stone of the Red Fort in 1618**.
- Named for its **massive enclosing walls of red sandstone**, it is adjacent to an older fort, the Salimgarh, built by Islam Shah Suri in 1546, with which it forms the Red Fort Complex.
- For its **inauguration in 1647**, the main halls of the palace were draped in rich tapestry and covered with silk from China and velvet from Turkey.
- With a circumference of almost one and a half miles, the fort is an **irregular octagon and has two entrances, the Lahore and Delhi Gates**
- The private apartments consist of a row of pavilions connected by a **continuous water channel**, known as the **Nahr-i-Behisht (Stream of Paradise)**.
- The Red Fort is considered to represent the zenith of Mughal creativity which, under the Shah Jahan, was brought to a new level of refinement.
- The **planning of the palace is based on Islamic prototypes**, but **each pavilion reveals architectural elements** typical of Mughal building, **reflecting a fusion of Persian, Timurid and Hindu traditions**. The Red Fort's innovative planning and architectural style, including the garden design, strongly influenced later buildings

and gardens in Rajasthan, Delhi, Agra and further afield

### Elements of the Red Fort

- The **Diwan-e-Aam is the Red Fort's hall of public audience**. The Mughal emperors would hold court here and meet dignitaries and foreign emissaries. In the recess behind the platform are fine examples of Italian Pietra-Dura work.
- **Pietra-Dura** is a term for the **inlay technique of using cut and fitted, highly polished colored stones** to create images. It is considered a decorative art.
- The piece de resistance of the fort, the **Diwan-e-Khas was the hall of private audience**. The most highly ornamented of all Shah Jahan's buildings, Diwan-e-Khas is a pavilion of white marble supported by **intricately carved pillars**. So enamoured was the **emperor** by the beauty of this pavilion that he **engraved** on it the following words: **"If there is paradise on the face of this earth, it is this, it is this."**
- Richly decorated with flowers of inlaid mosaic work of cornelian and other stones, the **Diwan-e-Khas once housed the famous Peacock Throne**, which when it was plundered by Nadir Shah in 1739

### Significance of Red Fort

- The Mughal emperor was so closely identified with legitimate government in the public mind that when the **country revolted in 1857**, the **mutinous soldiers made their way to Delhi**, seeking his command. When the insurrection in Delhi was subdued, the **British forces took over the Red Fort**, and **officers drank to their Queen's health in the Diwan-e-Khas**, where Mughal kings had held court.
- It was **in this hall that Bahadur Shah was tried, condemned, and deported**.
- In **1945-46**, **personnel from the Indian National Army were tried there**, sparking a massive wave of nationalist fervour in the run-up to independence..
- It was also from its ramparts that the **first Prime Minister of India**, Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, **announced to the nation that India was free from colonial rule**.

- **Every year on India's Independence Day** (15 August), the **Prime Minister hoists the Indian tricolour flag at the fort's main gate** and delivers a nationally broadcast speech from its ramparts.
- The Red Fort Complex is **managed directly by the Archaeological Survey of India**, which is also responsible for the protection of all national level heritage sites in India and Indian cultural properties **included in the World Heritage List**.

#### **Why in News:**

- The Delhi High Court dismissed a petition by the wife of the late Mirza Mohammed Bedar Bakht, great-grandson of last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar to hand over to her the possession of the Red Fort.

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# DEFENCE

## 1) Aircraft Carriers

### Why in News:

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence said that having three aircraft carriers will considerably enhance combat capabilities of the Navy.
- The country's first IAC (IAC-I) Vikrant is currently undergoing sea trials and is scheduled to be commissioned next year.

### What are Aircraft Carriers?

- A vessel that acts as a **seagoing airbase** with a **full-length flight deck and facilities for carrying, arming, deploying, and recovering aircraft** is known as an aircraft carrier.
- While the Indian Navy **currently operates one aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya**, it is keen to add a third one to its fleet in line with its prospective **plan to simultaneously operate three carrier battle groups (CBG)** so that two of them remain serviceable on either flank at any given time.
- **INS Vikrant**– The **first indigenous aircraft carrier**– to be **commissioned in 2022**. Motto of the IAC is Jayema Sam Yudhi Sprdhah. It is taken from Rigveda 1.8.3.
- Like Vikramaditya, **IAC-1 has a STOBAR (short take off but arrested recovery)** system of aircraft launch and recovery on the flight deck.
- **STOBAR** ("Short Take-Off But Arrested Recovery") is a system used for the **launch and recovery of aircraft** from the deck of an aircraft carrier, combining elements of "short take-off and vertical landing" (STOVL) with "catapult-assisted take-off but arrested recovery" (CATOBAR).
- **INS Vishal**– **proposed to be India's 2nd indigenous aircraft carrier**, is awaiting defence ministry's clearance.

### Need for aircraft carriers

- By its diplomatic and tactical power, its mobility, its autonomy and the variety of its means, the aircraft carrier is often the **centerpiece of modern combat fleets**.
- One of its great advantages is that, by sailing in international waters, it **does not interfere with any territorial sovereignty** and thus obviates the need for overflight

authorizations from third-party countries, **reduces the times and transit distances of aircraft** and therefore significantly increases the time of availability on the combat zone.

- **Maritime Capability Perspective Plan** of the Navy envisages a force level of three aircraft carriers, to ensure development of a capability to operate two Carrier Battle Groups (CBGs) at any given time.
- The combat capability, reach and versatility of the aircraft carrier would add formidable capabilities in the defence of the country and help **secure India's interests in the maritime domain**
- Its induction will give a **fillip to the sea control capabilities of the Navy** in the Indian Ocean Region. ·
- These measures would help **enhance the Navy's operational reach and prowess** to protect India's maritime interests.
- There is an **aggressive effort by China** to gain a foothold in the Indian Ocean Region.

## 2) Armoured Engineer Reconnaissance Vehicle

### Why in News:

- The first batch of next-generation **Armoured Engineer Reconnaissance Vehicles (AERV)**, **indigenously designed and developed** by DRDO, and manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited, was **formally inducted into the Indian Army**.

### About the vehicle



- AERV is manufactured with more than **90% indigenous content**.
- The AERV, which has been **developed by modifying the amphibious infantry**

**fighting vehicle** and was **designed** to meet the tactical and combat requirements of military engineers **carrying out terrestrial and under-water surveys in hostile terrains**, primarily for the **construction of assault bridges in desert, flat and even riverine areas for both offensive and defensive operations**, water reconnaissance, land reconnaissance, navigation and data backup.

- AERV is **capable of measuring soil bearing capacity on riverbanks** to determine if they are motorable for military vehicles on Go-No Go basis (critical parameters for bridge laying), dry and wet gaps in day and night conditions, slopes and height of river banks or canals.

- AERVs can navigate terrain using **Military Grid Co-ordinate System**, measure and plot **underwater beds and water currents of rivers or canals**, store data from various instruments on Control Console for further analysis and decision-making.
- **Instead of the turret**, the revolving tower, which an armoured vehicle usually has, has been **replaced in the case of the AERV with a laser range finder** and other electronic equipment. The vehicle also has **equipment measuring water currents, soil densities etc.** required for engineering columns to construct the bridges that can sustain desired operational load.

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## PIB ANALYSIS

### 1) Mission Karmayogi

#### About the programme

- Mission Karmayogi is a nationwide programme to lay the **foundation for capacity building of civil servants**. It will help the officers to learn about the best practices across the world.
- Officially called the "**National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)**", the mission plans to **transform human resource management in the country**.
- Mission Karmayogi aims to prepare the Indian civil servant for the future by making him more creative, constructive, imaginative, innovative, proactive, professional, progressive, energetic, enabling, transparent and technology-enabled.
- The fundamental focus of the reform is the creation of a '**citizen centric civil service**' capable of creating and delivering services conducive to economic growth and public welfare.
- It shifts the focus from "Rule based training to **Role based training**". Greater thrust has been laid on behavioural change.

#### Unfolding of Mission Karmayogi

- Mission Karmayogi programme will be delivered by setting up a digital platform called **iGOTKarmayogi**.
- The platform will act as a launchpad for the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building, which will enable a comprehensive reform of the capacity building apparatus at the individual, institutional and process levels.
- **NPCSCB** will be **governed by the Prime Minister's Human Resource Council**, which will also include state Chief Ministers, Union Cabinet ministers and experts. This council will approve and review civil service capacity building programmes.
- Besides this, there will be a **Cabinet Secretary Coordination Unit** comprising select secretaries and cadre controlling authorities.
- Also, there will be a **Capacity Building Commission**, which will include experts in related fields and global professionals. This

commission will prepare and monitor annual capacity building plans and audit human resources available in the government.

- There will be a wholly-owned **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), which will govern the iGOT-Karmayogi platform**.
- The SPV will be a "not-for-profit" company which will create and operationalise the content, market place and manage key business services of iGOT-Karmayogi platform.
- To cover around 46 lakh central employees, a sum of Rs 510.86 crore will be spent over a period of 5 years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. The expenditure is partly funded by multilateral assistance to the tune of \$50 million.

#### Why in News?

- The Government of India conducted a workshop on Mission Karmayogi.
- The aim of "Mission Karmayogi" is to impart futuristic vision to civil services which could effectively determine the roadmap for next 25 years and shape the Century India of 2047.

### 2) Bharatmala Pariyojana

#### About the Scheme

- Bharatmala Pariyojana is a new umbrella program for the highways sector that focuses on **optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement** across the country by **bridging critical infrastructure gaps** through effective interventions like development of Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, National Corridor Efficiency Improvement, Border and International connectivity roads, Coastal and Port connectivity roads and Green-field expressways.
- It was launched in **2017**.
- All key aspects of the scheme will be managed by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**.

#### Highlights of Bharatmala Pariyojana

- **Improvement in efficiency of existing corridors** through development of

Multimodal Logistics Parks and elimination of choke point;

- Enhance focus on improving connectivity in **North East** and leveraging synergies with **Inland Waterways**;
- Emphasis on **use of technology & scientific planning** for Project Preparation and Asset Monitoring.

#### Key features of the scheme

- **Improving the quality of roads** - The launch of the scheme has been done to bring a new wave of development in the nation in the form of well-maintained and developed roads. Under this project, the construction of roads in all parts of the nation will be undertaken.
- **Total road construction** - As per the draft of the scheme, the government and the ministry will strive to complete new roads, which will add up to a whopping 34, 800 kms.
- **Integrated scheme** - The Bharatmala is the name that is given to the road development and it will include many other related schemes as well. With the completion of all the schemes, the overall success of the scheme will be guaranteed.
- **Total tenure of the program** -The central government has the plans of finishing the scheme within a span of five years. Thus, all is set for finishing the first phase before the end of 2022.

#### Why in News?

- Till now, a length of about 6,750 km has been completed under the Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I.

### 3) National Crèche Scheme

#### What's in the news?

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development implements the **Centrally Sponsored National Crèche Scheme to provide day care facilities to children (age group of 6 months to 6 years) of working mothers.**
- It was launched in 2017.
- The Scheme provides an integrated package of the following services:
  1. Day care facilities including sleeping facilities.
  2. Early stimulation for children below 3 years and pre-school education for 3 to 6 years old children

3. Supplementary nutrition (to be locally sourced)
4. Growth monitoring
5. Health check-up and immunization.

#### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has announced that the number of functional creches in the country under the National Crèche Scheme during the last three years (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20) was 18040, 8018 and 6458 respectively.
- Creches are not functional in the country since the outbreak of Covid-19 to prevent spread of the pandemic.

### 4) YUVA scheme

#### About the Scheme

- In May 2021, the **Ministry of Education** launched '**Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors' (YUVA) scheme, a mentorship programme to train young authors.**
- The scheme is aimed at **training 75 aspiring writers below 30 years**, who are ready to express themselves and project India and its culture and literature globally.
- A **consolidated scholarship of Rs 50,000 per month** for a period of six months per author will be paid under the mentorship scheme.
- Through this scheme, the government aims to bring reading and authorship as a preferred profession at par with other job options.
- It is also expected to impart a positive psychological push to the young minds amidst the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of children.

#### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Education has announced the results of the All-India Contest organized on the Theme 'National Movement of India' under the PM-YUVA Mentorship Scheme.
- Out of the 75 selected authors, 38 are males and 37 are females. The selected authors will undergo six-months of Mentorship in which they would be provided research and editorial support under the guidance of eminent authors to develop their book proposals as full-fledged books. Their published books will be later translated into other Indian languages as well.

## 5) Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana

### About PMVDY

- Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojna (PMVDY) is an initiative targeting **livelihood generation for tribals** by harnessing the wealth of forest i.e. Van Dhan.
- Launched by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED** in **2018**, the programme aims to tap into traditional knowledge & skill sets of tribals by adding technology & IT to upgrade it at each stage and to convert the tribal wisdom into a viable economic activity.
- It is a mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain.
- Under the program, MFP based tribal groups / enterprises of around 300 members will be formed for collection, value addition, packaging & marketing of Minor Forest Produces. These tribal enterprises will be in the form of **Van Dhan Self Help Groups (SHGs)** which will be a group of 15-20 members and such 15 SHG groups will further be federated into a larger group of **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs)** of around 300 members.
- **TRIFED** will support the VDVKs through providing them with model business plans, processing plans & tentative list of equipment for carrying out the value addition work of MFPs.

### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched the **TRIFED VanDhan Chronicle**, an in-depth resource on the Van Dhan Yojana and TRIFED's activities related to the scheme.

### Related Information

#### TRIFED

- It is a national-level apex organization functioning under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** and it came into existence in 1987.
- The objective of TRIFED is:
  1. To uplift socio-economic conditions of the tribal poor by helping them develop and market their produce.
  2. To provide fair price to "Minor Forest Produce" (MFP) collected by tribes and enhance their level of income
  3. To ensure sustainable harvesting of the forest produce
  4. To help in increasing the bargaining power of the tribes to fetch good price of the MFP
  5. To build capacity of the tribal to make value addition to their products
- TRIFED, under the brand name **TRIBES INDIA**, markets the handcrafted products directly procured from the tribals in India through its 73 brick and mortar outlets all over India.
- Main activities of TRIFED include:
  - Retail Marketing Development
  - Minor Forest Produce Marketing Development
  - Skill up-gradation & Capacity Building of ST Artisans and MFP Gatherers
  - R&D Development/Intellectual Proprietary Rights (IPR) Activity

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# News in Depth

## AIR NEWS

### 1) Swadesh Darshan Scheme

#### About Swadesh Darshan

- The Swadesh Darshan Scheme was launched by the **Ministry of Tourism** in 2014.
- **Objective:** To develop **theme-based tourist circuits** in the country. These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.
- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** and efforts are made to achieve convergence with other schemes of Central and State Governments and also to leverage the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector.

#### The scheme has following objectives:

- Position tourism as a major engine of economic growth and job creation;
- Develop circuits having tourist potential in a planned and prioritized manner;
- Promote cultural and heritage value of the country to generate livelihoods in the identified regions;
- Follow community based development and pro-poor tourism approach;
- Create employment through active involvement of local communities;
- Projects under the scheme shall be under the following identified themes; **Eco-tourism, Wildlife, Buddhist, Desert, Spiritual, Ramayana, Krishna, Coastal, Northeast, Rural, Himalayan, Tribal and Heritage.**

#### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Tourism under 'Swadesh Darshan' scheme has sanctioned **5 projects under Buddhist circuit theme.**

### 2) KAPILA Campaign

#### About

- The government has launched a campaign namely Kalam Program for Intellectual Property Literacy and Awareness Campaign (KAPILA) on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 to **increase awareness regarding protection and exploitation of Intellectual Property (IP)** and also to provide funding support in order to promote filing of the Intellectual Property (IP) in Higher Education Institutions.
- A **KAPILA portal** has also been launched for this purpose.
- Under the initiative, activities like IP Clinic, Case Studies/ Articles regarding Innovation and Intellectual Property and online awareness programs and National Intellectual Property Literacy Week (NIPLW) have been conducted.

#### Why in News?

- More than 46,000 users have registered for KAPILA awareness programs.

### 3) Beej Gram Yojana

#### What's in the news?

- The Government of India has been implementing **Seed Village Programme (Beej Gram Yojana)** since 2014-15 to **upgrade the quality of farmer's saved seeds.**
- Under this programme **financial assistance for distribution of foundation/certified seeds** at 50% of seed cost for cereal crops and 60% for pulses, oilseeds, fodder and green manure crops is available for **up to one acre per farmer.**
- The Government of India also organizes **Zonal Seed Review Meeting** twice a year before onset of each sowing season i.e. Kharif & Rabi. In these meetings, Department of Agriculture of different States/UTs, National & State Level Seed Producing Agencies, Seed Certification

Agencies were called to assess the requirement and availability of seed across the country prior to every season, to ensure timely availability of seed to farmers.

**Why in News?**

- This information was given by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar in a written reply in Lok Sabha.

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## THE HINDU EDITORIALS

### 1) LPG adoption in rural India

#### Context

- This article highlights the **challenges in sustaining LPG adoption in rural India** and emphasises that the goal must be a more sustainable energy basket per family.

#### About PMUY

- The **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas** launched PMUY in 2016 to **provide clean cooking fuel to poor households**.
- It aims to provide **8 crore deposit free LPG connections to poor households**. The connections are issued in the **name of women** of the households.
- The scheme increases the usage of LPG and helps in reducing health disorders, air pollution and deforestation. Use of fossil fuels and conventional fuel like cow-dung, firewood etc. has serious implications on the health of rural women and children.
- Initially, the beneficiaries were identified through Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC), 2011 data. The **scope of PMUY has now been expanded to cover all the poor families in the country** subject to fulfilling the terms and conditions.
- Under the scheme, **cash assistance of Rs. 1600** is given to the beneficiaries to get a deposit-free new connection. Further, interest free loans are provided to purchase a stove and refill by Oil Marketing Companies.

#### PMUJ 2.0

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the second phase of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana – Ujjwala 2.0.
- During Ujjwala 1.0, launched in 2016, a target was set to provide LPG connections to 5 crore women members of BPL households. Later, the target was revised to **8 Crore LPG connections which was achieved in August 2019**.
- In the **Union budget for Financial Year 2021-22**, a **provision for an additional one crore LPG connection** under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was announced. These one crore additional connections under Ujjwala 2.0 aim to provide **deposit-free LPG connections to those low-income families who could not**

**be covered under the earlier phase of this scheme.**

- Along with a deposit free LPG connection, Ujjwala 2.0 will **provide first refill and hotplate free of cost to the beneficiaries**.

#### Why LPG?

- According to the recently released **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5**, there was a higher prevalence of TB in households that were using solid fuels when compared to those using clean cooking fuels in most States.

#### Data on LPG use

- Over the five years, the **average per capita consumption** among Ujjwala customers has hovered around three cylinders per year (of 14.2 kg), rising to **4.2 (2020-21)**.
- Relatively poorer Ujjwala consumers are reaching the LPG consumption levels of relatively well-off non-Ujjwala rural consumers.
- Completed the **target of enlisting eight crore Ujjwala customers** in late 2019.

#### How was this possible?

- **Successful implementation of the Direct Benefit Transfer of LPG (DBTL) or PAHAL (Pratyaksh Hanstantrit Labh)** scheme of 2014 which freed up the financial resources needed to dream of a large-scale programme for deposit-free LPG connections.
- Ujjwala was conceptualised and launched which ensured enhanced availability of LPG.
- **Various capacities** such as of the ports for handling imports, of tanks for storage of LPG, of pipelines and trucks for transportation of gas, and of bottling plants for filling in more cylinders were **enhanced**.
- Production of cylinders, pressure regulators, hose and affordable LPG stoves was also enhanced.
- **New distributors/dealers** were appointed to reach remote pockets.
- Enthusiasm for Ujjwala was sustained by **creating avenues for local MPs** and other elected representatives to support Ujjwala and its implementation.

#### Challenges in PMUY

- While the number of LPG distributors went up in the five years of Ujjwala, the **number of administrative blocks which do not have an LPG distributor has come down drastically.**
- The novel coronavirus pandemic has resulted in an **increase in LPG prices.**

#### Way forward

- The push has to be such that every household moves toward adopting a more sustainable cooking energy basket.
1. **Improvements in regular and on-demand supplies of LPG**
  2. Options for **refill financing**
  3. **Alternative remunerative uses for cow dung and biomass**
    - (Possibly on the pattern of procurement of cow dung as is being done in Chhattisgarh)
    - A massive **boost to women's incomes through the National Rural Livelihoods Mission**
    - These all have great potential to **nudge women to choose a more sustainable cooking mix.**

## 2) Why is the electoral reforms Bill a problem?

#### Context:

- This article highlights the challenges associated with The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

#### About The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 **amends the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Representation of the People Act, 1951 to implement certain electoral reforms.**
- The **1950 Act** provides for **allocation of seats and delimitation of constituencies for elections, qualifications of voters, and preparation of electoral rolls.**
- The **1951 Act** provides for the **conduct of elections, and offences and disputes related to elections.**

#### Linking electoral roll data with Aadhaar:

- The 1950 Act provides that a person may apply to the electoral registration officer for inclusion of their name in the electoral roll of a constituency. After verification, if the officer is satisfied that the applicant is entitled to registration, he will direct the

applicant's name to be included in the electoral roll.

- The Bill adds that the **electoral registration officer may require a person to furnish their Aadhaar number** for establishing their identity. If their name is already in the electoral roll, then the Aadhaar number may be required for authentication of entries in the roll.
- Persons will not be denied inclusion in the electoral roll or have their names deleted from the roll, if they are unable to furnish Aadhaar number due to sufficient cause as prescribed. Such persons may be permitted to furnish alternate documents prescribed by the central government.

#### Qualifying date for enrolment in electoral roll:

- Under the 1950 Act, the qualifying date for enrolment in the electoral roll is January 1 of the year in which such roll is being prepared or revised. This implies that a person who turns 18 (i.e., eligible to vote) after January 1 can enroll in the electoral roll only when the roll is prepared/ revised the next year.
- The Bill amends this to provide **four qualifying dates in a calendar year, which will be January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.**

#### Requisitioning of premises for election purposes:

- The 1951 Act permits the state government to **requisition premises** needed or likely to be needed for being used as polling stations, or for storing ballot boxes after a poll has been conducted.
- The Bill expands the purposes for which such premises can be requisitioned. These include using the premises for **counting, storage of voting machines and poll-related material, and accommodation of security forces and polling personnel.**
- **Gender-neutral provisions:**
- The 1950 Act permits certain persons who are ordinarily resident in a constituency to register in electoral rolls. Such persons include those holding a service qualification, such as members of the armed forces or central government employees posted outside India.
- The wives of such persons are also deemed to be ordinarily residing in the same constituency if they reside with them. The

1951 Act enables the wife of a person holding a service qualification to vote either in person or by postal ballot.

- The Bill replaces the term 'wife' with 'spouse' in both the Acts.

### Challenges with The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021

#### Contrary to the voluntary provisions of the amendment

- The law does not prescribe any guiding principles to decide when an Aadhaar number may be "required".
- The Central government has the final say in prescribing the conditions ("sufficient cause") under which an individual will be permitted to enter or remain on the electoral rolls, in case of her "inability" to furnish their Aadhaar which means that the Central government will decide what reasons are considered acceptable for a voter to remain on the electoral roll.
- The law does not even consider a situation where an individual may be opposed to linking her Aadhaar number to the electoral database further undermining the voluntary premise of the amendments.
- **Burden of proof shifts**
- Instead of the Government proactively ensuring registration on the electoral rolls (such as through house-to-house verification) to achieve universal adult franchise, the burden now shifts to individuals who may be unable/unwilling to link their Aadhaar to justify their retention on the rolls.

- The law does not provide for a right to a hearing before such deletion.

#### Political profiling

- Since Aadhaar is directly used for disbursement of welfare and direct benefit transfers, linking it with voter ID may provide a direct method for the government to influence and manipulate voters.

#### Questionable efficacy of Aadhaar deduplication

- There are no publicly available audit reports either on the efficacy of Aadhaar deduplication or on the authenticity of the Aadhaar database.
- It is worth questioning how the Aadhaar project is once again being used for purposes far beyond the stated "welfare" purpose that was upheld by the Supreme Court of India in the Aadhaar judgment as the basis for the introduction of the Aadhaar Act as a Money Bill in Parliament.

#### Way forward

- With the possibility of digital processing of electoral data, the risks associated with transparency have increased manifold. Yet, there are several modern techniques from cryptography and computer science that may help mitigate the risks by enabling both privacy and public auditability. An electoral reforms bill needed to explore and address these issues.

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## INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED

### 1) NASA's flagship telescope, and its successor

#### Why in News?

- Recently, NASA has announced the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) .
- Webb, the world's premier space science observatory, will succeed the Hubble Space Telescope, NASA's flagship telescope that has been in service for more than three decades now.

#### Features of Hubble Telescope

- NASA says Webb is **not Hubble's replacement — rather, its successor** whose science goals were motivated by the results from Hubble.
- Webb will **primarily study the universe in the infrared**, while Hubble looks at it mainly at **optical and ultraviolet wavelengths**.
- Infrared observations are important because light at this wavelength can **penetrate the dust that shrouds newly formed stars and planets, and make them visible**.
- **Webb's mirror is much larger than Hubble's**; it can, therefore, look farther back into time than Hubble. Also, Hubble is in a much closer orbit around Earth than Webb will be.

#### Size

- Webb's primary mirror is approximately 6.5 metres in diameter compared to Hubble's mirror has a diameter of 2.4 metres, which means Webb's collecting area is around 6.25 times that of Hubble's.

#### Orbit

- Hubble orbits the Earth at an altitude of **~570 km. Webb will not orbit the Earth, instead it will sit at the Earth-Sun L2 Lagrange point**, 1.5 million km away.
- This means that Webb will **orbit the Sun along with the Earth**, but will stay fixed at the same spot in relation to the Earth and the Sun.
- At the L2 point, Webb's solar shield will block the light from the Sun, Earth, and Moon, which will help it stay cool — important for an infrared telescope.

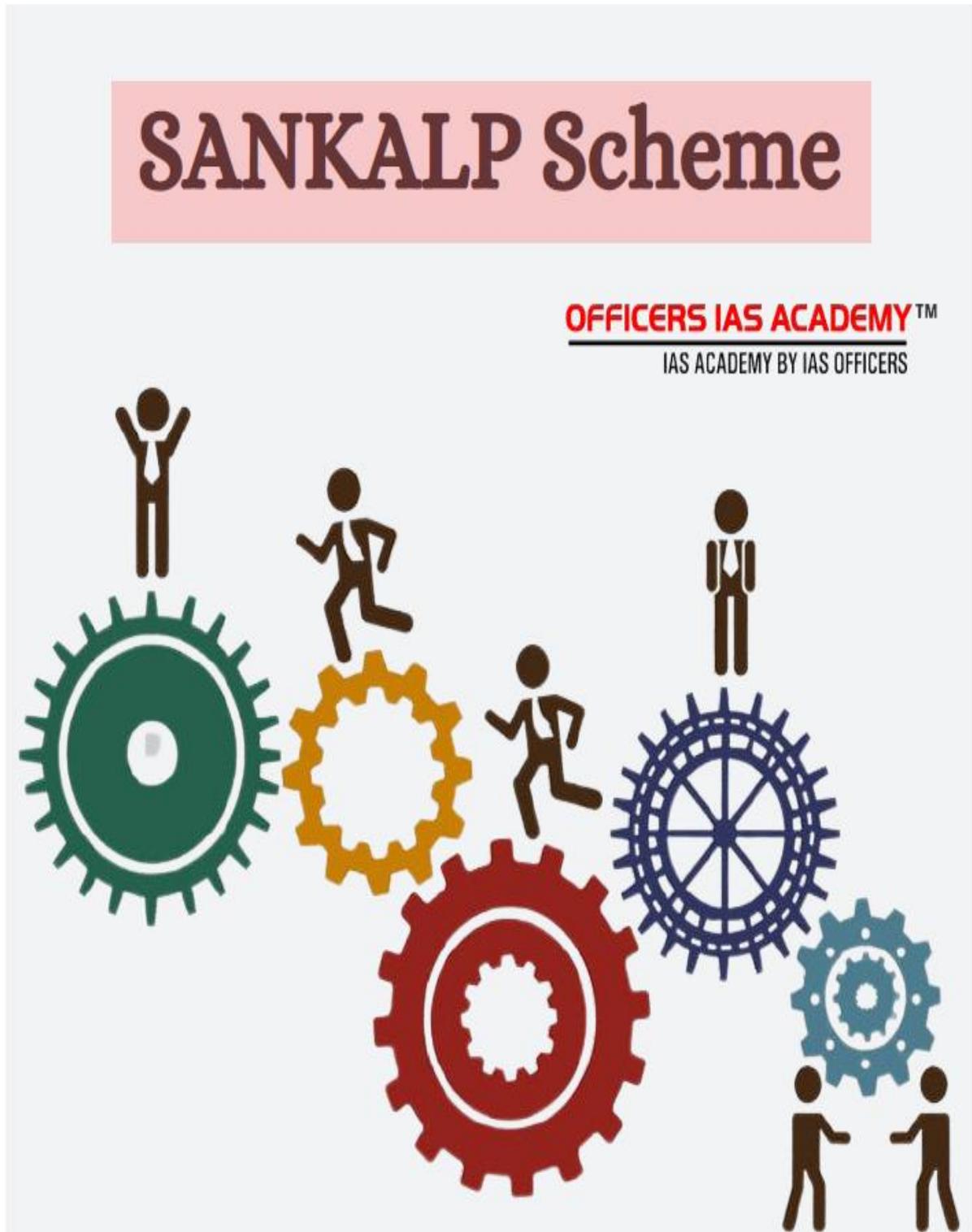
#### How Far?

- Because light takes time to travel, the farther away an object is, the farther back in time we are looking. Thus, while Hubble can see the equivalent of "toddler galaxies", Webb will be able to see "baby galaxies".
- This is also because Webb is an infrared telescope, and can see distant objects which are very dim at visible wavelengths of light.

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## *INFOGRAPHIC OF THE WEEK*

### 1) SANKALP Scheme



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# About the Scheme

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Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) is a **supporting programme to skill training schemes** which focuses on improvement of quality, strengthening of institutions and inclusion of weaker sections in skill training.



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Ministry of Skill Development  
& Entrepreneurship

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It is a **World Bank loan assisted programme of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with three key Result Areas (RA), namely**

Institutional Strengthening  
at Central, State, and  
District level;



Quality Assurance of skill  
development programmes;  
and



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Inclusion of marginalized populations in skill development programmes.

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Skill development programmes



**SANKALP**

The implementation period of SANKALP is till March, 2023

## Outcomes

SANKALP has undertaken several initiatives to contribute to improvement in employability, some of which are as under:



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**Strengthening of District Skill Committees** for improved access to and demand driven skill trainings for employment.



**Emphasis on skill certification in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** at Gram Panchayat level for improving employment qualitatively.



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Funded development of an IT system namely “**Skill India Portal**” to capture the data for skilling related activities across the country.



**Global Skill Gap study** was conducted to identify the global gaps in demand and supply of skilled manpower as well as overseas employment opportunities for skilled workers from India. The Report helped in identifying important countries of interest as destination and job roles of interest.



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A **Gender Action Plan (GAP)** has been prepared for promoting inclusion of women in Short term skilling and livelihood opportunities.



## Why in News?



सत्यमेव जयते

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT  
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP

This information was given by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in the Parliament recently.



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