

Current Affairs



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July 2019

 **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



Jal Shakti Abhiyan
Working on War
Footing to
Save Water

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग
UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

AYUSH

**Kaushal
Yuva
Samwaad**

National Digital Health Blueprint

Jatan

VIRTUAL
MUSEUM
BUILDER



Clean Fuel.

Bonds

Government Schemes

SDG Dashboard launched to track progress



Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has launched Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) dashboard to track India's progress on the Agenda 2030 adopted by United Nations (UN). It was launched on the occasion of National Statistics Day (observed on June 30 to celebrate birth anniversary of Prof. P C Mahalanobis).

SDG dashboard

It is India's official data repository of National Indicator Framework on SDGs, the country's largest monitoring framework with 306 statistical indicators.

It has been developed in partnership with United Nations in India, DFID India and data intelligence firm Social Cops.

It is a first of its kind national platform that pulls together reliable data from over 100 different data sets, portals and sectors.

Features: It is unique, searchable platform that provides data and insights on how the country is progressing on the SDGs. It also allows state governments to track their performance on each goal, compare it to other states and identify priority areas, which need urgent action.

Sustainable Development Goals

Officially called as 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. It provides shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. It proposes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (further divided in 169 targets) as urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in global partnership to end poverty, protect planet, improve

health, education and ensuring that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

India and SDG: SDGs are a national priority for India and Union Government has committed to achieving these goals for all sections of the population by 2030. India's progress in SDGs is crucial, as the country is home to about 17% of the world population. India has been closely monitoring its progress on SDGs through its National Indicator Framework and India SDG Index released in 2018.

Notes

STUDY IQ

UGC launches STRIDE scheme to boost research culture in universities



University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved new scheme - 'Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy' (STRIDE) to boost research culture in universities. It aims to identify young talent, strengthen research culture, build capacity, promote innovation and support trans-disciplinary research for India's developing economy and national..

STRIDE Scheme

Objectives: (i) Strengthen research culture and innovation in colleges and universities (ii) Help students and faculty to contribute towards India's developing economy with help of collaborative research (iii) development. (iii) Fund high impact research projects in Humanities and Social Sciences.

Implementation: UGC has set up advisory committee under the chairmanship of Prof Bhushan Patwardhan, Vice Chairman to oversee the entire scheme.

Three components of STRIDE Scheme

Component 1: Identify young talent and provide research capacity building in diverse disciplines by mentoring, nurturing and supporting young talents to innovate solutions for local, regional, national and global problems. This component is open to all disciplines for grant up to Rs 1 crore.

Component 2: Enhance problem-solving skills with help of social innovation and action research to improve well being of people and contribute to India's developing economy. It will facilitate collaborations between

universities, government, voluntary organisations, and industries. This component is open to all disciplines for grant up to Rs. 50 lakh to 1 crore.

Component 3: Fund high impact research projects in field of identified thrust areas in humanities and human sciences through national network of eminent scientists from leading institutions. It is only open to specific disciplines with possible grant of up to Rs 2 lakhs to developing a proposal.

About University Grants Commission (UGC)

It is higher education regulator of India. It is statutory body established in accordance to UGC Act 1956. It functions under Union Ministry of Human Resource Development.

It is mandated with coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education.

Its headquarters is in New Delhi and has six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore.

Functions: (i) provide recognition to universities in India (ii) oversee distribution of grants to universities and colleges in India, (iii) provide scholarships and fellowships to beneficiaries and (iv) monitor conformity to its regulations by universities and colleges.

Notes

Government launches Jal Shakti Abhiyan



Union Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan, a nationwide campaign for water conservation and water security. The focus of campaign will be on water stressed districts and blocks. It is collaborative effort of various Ministries of the Government of India and State Governments, being coordinated by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS).

Jal Shakti Abhiyan

It is campaign for rainwater harvesting and water conservation. It will mainly rely largely on mass awareness programmes.

Its focus will be on 1,592 “water-stressed” blocks in 257 districts. In first phase, will run through citizen participation during the monsoon season, from 1st July, 2019 to 15th September, 2019.

In additional Phase 2, it will be run from 1st October, 2019 to 30th November, 2019 for States receiving the North East retreating monsoons.

Primary Strategy: Under this campaign Government will implement the following five important water conservation interventions in water stressed blocks viz. (i) water conservation and rainwater harvesting, (ii) restoration and renovation of traditional and other water bodies/tanks, (iii) reuse of water and recharging of structures, (iv) watershed development and (v) intensive afforestation.

Other initiatives: The conservation efforts under this campaign will be supplemented by initiatives like developing block and district water conservation plans. Besides, 'krishi vigyan kendra melas' will be organized to promote efficient water use for irrigation and better crop choices.

Funding: There will be no additional funding or specific targets for the campaign to achieve. Instead, the campaign will only focus “bring sensitivity on the subject, and give focussed approach”.

Notes

STUDY IQ

AYUSH Grid Project for Digitisation of AYUSH sector



The Ministries of AYUSH and Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in New Delhi to collaborate on the digitization of the AYUSH sector. Under this collaboration, MeITY has agreed to give technical support to AYUSH Ministry for planning and development of AYUSH GRID Project.

AYUSH GRID Project

This project is being implemented by Ministry of AYUSH in pursuance to the National Health Policy 2017 and e-governance initiative.

It aims to digitize entire Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH), sector leading to transformation in field of health care delivery at all levels, along with greater research, education, delivery of various health care programmes and better drug regulations.

e-initiatives of MeitY

MeitY has taken various Health initiatives such as e-Aushadhi, e-Rakt Kosh, e-Hospital, Online Registration System (ORS) and e-Shushrut for digitizing internal workflows and processes of hospitals across the country. It has also launched an online information guide called Vikaspeda, a portal for the various social sectors including Health and it offers information in 23 languages.

TIES: Government approves assistance for three trade promotion centres



Department of Commerce under Union Ministry of Trade and Commerce has approved financial assistance for three trade promotion centres under 'Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)'. These three trade promotion centres are

Establishment of Main Exhibition Building (Phase-II) at Trade cum Permanent Exhibition Centre at Imphal, Manipur.

Expansion of Chennai Trade Centre, Tamil Nadu.

Establishment of Trade Promotion Centre at Minto Hall, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

About Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)

It was launched by Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry in March, 2017. It had replaced Assistance to States for Development of Export Infrastructure and Allied Activities (ASIDE) Scheme launched in 2015. **Objective:** To enhance export competitiveness by bridging gaps in export infrastructure, creating focused export infrastructure and first-mile and last-mile connectivity for export-oriented projects and addressing quality and certification measures.

Eligibility: Central and State Agencies, including Export Promotion Councils, SEZ Authorities, Commodities Boards and Apex Trade Bodies recognised under EXIM policy of Central Government are eligible for financial support under this scheme.

Financial Assistance: Central Government funding will be in 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 case of projects located in North Eastern States and Himalayan States including J&K, this grant can be upto 80% of the total equity.

Haryana Government launches Meri Fasal Mera Byora portal



Haryana government has launched 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' portal to enable farmers to report their land and crop details. The online portal will also help them receive the benefits of several government schemes directly.

Meri Fasal Mera Byora portal

It brings together departments of agriculture and farmers' welfare, revenue, food civil supplies and consumer affairs and science and technology on single platform for betterment of the farmers.

It mandates farmers from the state to upload details about crops sown in their field on the portal at nearby Common Service Centres (CSCs) or Atal Seva Kendras or with the help of VLEs by end of July.

It also mandates farmers to fill the details about the non-cultivated land in case he has not sown any crop yet.

Financial incentive: Farmers on registering themselves on this portal will be provided with incentive of Rs 10 per acre or part thereof, subject to minimum of Rs. 20 to maximum Rs 50. This amount will be directly deposited in farmer's bank accounts.

Benefits of portal: It will make the distribution of seeds, fertilizers and farm loans more transparent and easy. It will enable farmers to avail the subsidy on agriculture implements easily. It will also make damage assessment during natural calamities and disbursal of relief in cases of crop damage easier. It will also provide information related to sowing, harvesting season and mandi on real time basis.

Government launches Kaushal Yuva Samwaad



Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MoSDE) launched of 'Kaushal Yuva Samwaad' aimed at creating an open dialogue with youth across all skill training centres to hear their ideas and recommendations to help scale up existing programmes. It will be organised between July 8 and July 10, 2019 across all Skill India training centres to commemorate World youth Skills Day (observed on July 15) and celebrate the 4th Anniversary of the Skill India Mission,

Kaushal Yuva Samvaad

Objective: Create a dialogue between the youth and the Ministry which is intended to identify and remedy the gaps so that all the skill development programs are properly aligned to the current demands and help in creating a skilled workforce for the future.

Features: It will be the platform to discuss potential issues and solutions from the candidates' perspective. It will also give MoSDE perspective to match aspirations of youth with offerings of Skill India.

Participating Centres: It will be organised across all Skill India training centres, namely, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras, Industrial Training Institutes, Polytechnics, and other fee-based training centres across the country, an official statement said.

Each training centre is mandated to invite minimum of 20 candidates to participate in Kaushal Yuva Samwaad. After the dialogue, recommendations will be submitted to the ministry through a portal.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme: Projects under Buddhist Circuit in UP



Government has sanctioned project for development of Srawasti, Kushinagar & Kapilvastu in Uttar Pradesh under the Buddhist Circuit theme of Swadesh Darshan Scheme in the year 2016-17. It was The informed by Union Tourism Minister of State (I/C) Prahlad Singh Patel in reply to question in Lok Sabha.

Key facts

Ministry of Tourism has identified Buddhist Circuit as one of 15 thematic circuits for development under Swadesh Darshan Scheme. All sites in country related to Buddhism including the ones in Uttar Pradesh are covered under this Circuit.

Swadesh Darshan scheme

It is one of flagship schemes of Ministry of Tourism launched in 2014 for development of thematic circuits i.e. theme-based tourist circuits across the country in a planned and prioritised manner.

These tourist circuits are being developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.

It is 100% centrally funded scheme. It also has provision for leveraging voluntary funding under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central PSUs and corporate sector.

15 thematic circuits that have been identified so far for development under it are Buddhist, North-East India, Coastal, Himalayan, Krishna, Desert, Eco, Wildlife, Tribal, Rural, Sufi, Tirtankar, Spiritual, Ramayana and Heritage.

Such theme based tourist circuits are being developed in manner to supports communities, provide employment and fosters social integration without comprising upon environmental concerns and provides unique experiences to tourists.

Identification of Projects: The projects to be taken up for development under above scheme are identified in consultation with State Governments/UT Administrations and are sanctioned subject to submission of project proposals, their adherence to relevant scheme guidelines, submission of suitable detailed project reports, availability of funds and utilization of funds released earlier.

Funding of projects: It varies from state to state. It is finalised on the basis of detailed project reports prepared by Programme Management Consultant (PMC) which is national level consultant for implementing the scheme.

Notes

Odisha implement's Centre's Witness Protection Scheme



Odisha Government has informed State High Court that it has implemented Centre's Witness Protection Scheme 2018. Endorsing this Central scheme in December 2018, Supreme Court had directed all States/UTs to implement it in letter and spirit. Odisha government has implemented apex court order by way of gazette notification of its Witness Protection Scheme-2019 on July 6.

About Witness Protection Scheme, 2018

Objective: It aims to ensure that investigation, prosecution and trial of criminal offences are not prejudiced because witnesses are intimidated or frightened to give evidence without protection from other criminal forces. It provides for protection of witnesses based on the threat assessment.

Protection measures inter alia include: Protection/change of identity of witnesses, their relocation, installation of security devices at residence of witnesses, usage of specially designed Court rooms, etc.

It provides for three categories of witness as per threat perception:

Category A: Where threat extends to life of witness or his family members, during investigation or trial or thereafter.

Category B: Where threat extends to safety, reputation or property of witness or his family members, during investigation or trial or thereafter.

Category C: Where threat is moderate and extends to harassment or intimidation of witness or his family member's, reputation or property,

during investigation or trial or thereafter.

State Witness Protection Fund: There is provision for State Witness Protection Fund for meeting expenses of scheme. This fund is operated by Department/ Home Ministry under State/UT Government. It shall comprise of (i) Budgetary allocation made in Annual Budget by State Government. (ii) Receipt of amount of costs imposed/ ordered to be deposited by courts/ tribunals in Witness Protection Fund. (iii) Donations and contributions from Philanthropist, Charitable Institutions, organizations and individuals permitted by the Government. (iv) Funds contributed under Corporate Social Responsibility.

Background

Supreme Court in its Judgment in December 2018 in Writ Petition (Criminal) had endorsed this Scheme. As per Article 141/142 of Constitution of India, this scheme endorsed in this judgment of the Supreme Court is binding on all Courts within territory of India and enforceable in all States/UTs.

Notes

Phase-II of DBT of Fertilizer Subsidy launched



Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers launched Phase-II of the Direct Benefit Transfer of Fertilizer Subsidy (DBT 2.0). As part of second phase, three new technology initiatives have been launched which are aimed at further improving the DBT system

New initiatives of DBT 2.0 are as under:

DBT Dashboards: These dashboards provide various reports regarding Fertilizer Stock position at ports, plants, in States, at District levels. It will facilitate real-time monitoring of the availability and sale of fertilizers within each State/UT. It will also facilitate accurate information gathering and decision-making w.r.t. position of requirement/supply/availability of various fertilizers at National, State and District levels,

PoS 3.0 Software: It is multi-lingual facility would provide Aadhar virtual ID option for registration, login and sale activity in DBT software. It also has provision for area-specific, crop-specific recommendations based on Soil Health Card (SHC) data. It will capture sale to farmers, mixture manufacturers, planter association separately.

Desktop PoS Version: It is multilingual desktop version of PoS software that will serve as an alternative or added facility to PoS devices. Retailers with laptops and computer systems can use high-speed broadband service for fertilizer sales. It is also more robust and secure. It is developed and handled directly from the central HQ team at DoF.

Background

Department of Fertilizers (DoF) has implemented Phase-I of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system in fertilizer (DBT 1.0) from March 2018. It is aimed at ease of living in the lives of farmers through use of modern technology and plugging leakages, pilferages and black marketing. It is envisaged release of 100% subsidy on various fertilizer grades to fertilizer companies on basis of actual sales made by retailer to beneficiaries. Project Monitoring Cell was set up at DoF to oversee implementation of DBT exclusively. Central Government bears over Rs 70,000 crore annually as fertiliser subsidy to give cheaper farm nutrient to farmers.

Notes

STUDY IQ

Agri-Business Incubation Centre launched in Chhattisgarh



Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare launched Agri Business Incubation Centre at Indira Gandhi Agriculture University, Raipur in Chhattisgarh. It has been set up under National Agriculture Development Scheme- RAFTAAR.

Chhattisgarh

It will focus on innovations, skill building and entrepreneurs development in agriculture and allied sectors. It will also act as catalyst for developing an ecosystem conducive for growth of agriprenurship in the state and foster a “start-up” culture.

About National Agriculture Development Scheme- RAFTAAR

Its full form is Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied sector Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR).

Objective: To make farming remunerative economic activity through strengthening farmer's efforts, risk mitigation and promoting agri-business entrepreneurship. To empower youth through skill development, innovation and agrientrepreneurship based business models

Features: It provides states with considerable flexibility and autonomy for planning and executing programs. State Agriculture Departments act as Nodal Implementing Agency. It will incentivize states to increase allocations for agriculture and allied sectors and help in creation of post-harvest infrastructure and promotion of private investment in farm sector across the country.

Funding: It is provided to States as 60:40 grants between Centre and States (90:10 for North Eastern States and Himalayan States).

Sub-schemes under RKVY-RAFTAAR: (i) Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India. (ii) Crop Diversification Program (iii) Reclamation of Problem Soil. (iv) Foot & Mouth Disease Control Program (FMD-CP). (v) Saffron Mission and (vi) Accelerated Fodder Development Programme (AFDP).

Notes

STUDY IQ

Union Government running Seva Bhoj Yojana



Union Minister of State (I/c) of Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel in a written reply in the Lok Sabha has notified that Union Government is running Seva Bhoj Yojana for providing assistance to charitable religious institutions for serving free food to public.

About Seva Bhoj Yojana

It is Central Sector Scheme for providing reimbursement of Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and Central Government's share of Integrated GST (IGST) paid by charitable/religious institutions on purchase of specific raw food items for serving free food to public or devotees.

Objective: It aims at providing assistance to charitable religious institutions providing food, prasad, langar (Community Kitchen), Bhandara free of cost without any discrimination to public and devotee by lessening their financial burden.

Beneficiaries: Financial assistance is given to charitable/religious institutions (like Gurudwara, Temples, Dharmik Ashram, Mosques, Dargah, Church, Math, Monasteries etc) if they have been distributing free food in form of 'prasad', 'langar'/bhandara to at least 5000 persons in a calendar month for at least past 3 years.

Such institutions should be covered under Section 10 (23BBA) of Income Tax (IT) Act or as Public Trust under any law for time being in force of statutory religious bodies or institutions registered under Section 12AA of IT Act or are institutions registered as Society under Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860).

Specific raw food items covered for GST reimbursement: (i) Ghee (ii) Edible Oil (iii) Sugar/Burra/Jaggery (iv) Rice (v) Atta/Maida/Rava/Flour and (vi) Pulses.

Exemptions: Financial Assistance will not be given to charitable/religious institutions that are receipt of any Financial Assistance from Central/State Government for purpose of distributing free food. It will be also not given to institution/organization blacklisted under provisions of Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) or under provisions of any Act/Rules of Central/State.

Notes

STUDY IQ

Govt to roll out rotavirus vaccination drive in all states



Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) is set to roll out rotavirus vaccine in universal immunisation programme across all states by September 2019. This is one of the three 100-day targets identified by Union Health Ministry. As part of the exercise, all 2.6 crore children born in India annually will be eligible to receive free of cost the vaccine that will protect them from diarrhoea.

Current Implementation

The vaccine is currently being administered in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Assam, Tripura, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. By September 2019, all remaining 25 states/UTs will be covered under the programme.

Other two 100-day targets set by the ministry: (i) To start a programme for setting up of at least one medical college or postgraduate medical institute — public or private — in every district in the country. (ii) Complete ban on e-cigarettes across the country (Currently nine states — Chandigarh, Punjab, Karnataka, Mizoram, Kerala, J&K, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have banned sale, manufacture, distribution and import of e-cigarettes).

About Rotavirus

It is a most common causative agent of diarrhea in children. It spreads from person to person due to parasiting and bacterial agents that are primarily transmitted through contaminated food or water. It is responsible for estimated 36% of hospitalisations for childhood diarrhoea around world and for estimated 200,000 deaths in low- and middle-income countries. In India, it kills nearly 80 thousand children under age of 5 years and up to 10 lakh hospitalizations each year (thus, India has highest burden of diarrhea child deaths in the world).

Notes

STUDY IQ

World Bank to offer \$250 million to Kerala for disaster management



World Bank has announced that it will offer loan of \$250 million to Kerala Government for its First Resilient Kerala project. This project is aimed at enhancing the state's resilience against the impacts of natural disasters and climate change in the wake of last year's floods.

The announcement was made during "Rebuild Kerala: Development partners' conclave," a meeting of various funding agencies for rebuilding flood-ravaged Kerala.

Background

The 2018 floods and landslides in Kerala led to severe impact on infrastructure, property, and lives and livelihoods of people in the state. One sixth of state's population (about 5.4 million people) were affected due to these floods and 1.4 million people were displaced from their homes.

About First Resilient Kerala Program

It is part of Union Government's support to Kerala's 'Rebuild Kerala Development Programme' aimed at building a green and resilient Kerala. It is first 'State Partnership' of World Bank in India. It is also first of two Development Policy Operations aiming to mainstream disaster and climate resilience into critical infrastructure and services.

Objective: (i) Enhance State's resilience against impacts of natural disasters and climate change. (ii) Strengthen State's institutional and financial capacity to protect assets and livelihoods of poor and vulnerable groups through an inclusive and participatory approach.

Strategy of Program: It aims to support the State with (i) Improve river basin planning and water infrastructure operations management, water supply and sanitation services. (ii) Improve resilience of core road network. (iii) Resilient and sustainable agriculture, enhanced risk insurance for agriculture. (iii) Risk-based urban planning and strengthening expenditure planning by urban local bodies (ULBs). (iv) Unifying and maintaining up-to-date land records in high risk areas (v) Strengthening fiscal and public financial management capacity of State Government.

Note: World Bank is already supporting Kerala Government through engagements such as Second Kerala State Transport Project, Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project, National Hydrology Project, National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project Phase 2 and Kerala Local Government and Service Delivery Project.

Notes

Government launches National Digital Health Blueprint



GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES NATIONAL DIGITAL HEALTH BLUEPRINT

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB). Its objective is to establish state-of-the-art digital health systems, for managing core digital health data, infrastructure required for its seamless exchange.

About National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB)

It aims to create national digital health eco-system, in public domain and sought inputs from various stakeholders on its vision.

It seeks to create a system of personal health records, based on international standards and easily accessible to the citizens and healthcare providers

It focuses on providing efficient and affordable health coverage through wide-range of data and infrastructure services by leveraging open digital systems that will ensure security and privacy of personal information, It will support quality of healthcare, universal health coverage in efficient, accessible, inclusive, affordable, timely and safe manner through provision of a wide range of data, information, and infrastructure services.

Government reviews Draft Plan for Power Distribution Sector



Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC) RK Singh recently reviewed first ever Draft Plan for Power Distribution Sector. It has been prepared by Central Electricity Authority (CEA) under the guidance of the Ministry of Power. Till now, Union Government was preparing Perspectives Plans for Generation and Transmission Sectors under aegis of National Electricity Plan (NEP).

Key highlights of Draft Plan

Objective: It is aimed at sustaining goal of 24X7 uninterrupted power for all with increasing demand of electricity by consumers. It keeps needs of consumers at the center of its focus.

Features: It lays emphasis on 100% metering of all consumers and providing an electricity connection on demand. It envisages frontier technology initiatives with objective of providing reliable quality power supply to consumers.

Smart metering: It also envisages conversion of all electricity consumer meters into smart meters in prepaid mode within next three years. This will help consumers in conserving energy and plan their electricity usage in an efficient and optimum manner.

Projections: It anticipates an increase in Distribution substation capacity by 38%, Distribution transformation capacity by 32% and an increase in different type of feeder lengths by 27-38% till 2022.

Cooperative Federalism: The plan, once released, will be operationalized along with States and their DISCOMs under the spirit of cooperative and competitive federalism.

Elephant bonds for declaring undisclosed income



Government may soon launch Elephant Bonds as part of new amnesty scheme to the income tax defaulters in the country for declaring undisclosed income. This was suggested by high-level government-appointed committee on trade and industry headed by economist Dr. Surjit S. Bhalla. The recommendation of the advisory group regarding undisclosed income seems to be based on the fact that black money exists in domestic sector and it should be utilised in a productive manner.

What are the elephant bonds?

They are proposed sovereign bonds (debt instruments) to be issued for period of 25 years in which people declaring undisclosed income will be bound to invest 50 per cent, similar to an amnesty scheme. These funds will be utilised only for infrastructure projects, both new and old. Thus, these bonds will serve as specialised security product providing funds towards Long Term Infrastructure.

Significance of elephant bonds

Such bonds are necessary part of Central Government's carrot and stick policy. This will allow past tax defaulters to join mainstream without attracting penalties. This will also provide conducive way to increase tax revenue along with increasing the number of taxpayers and beneficiaries in tax base who had not declared their assets previously. It will improve funding for long term infrastructure projects which are critical part in increasing economic growth.

Previous Amnesty schemes

These schemes were aimed at encouraging people to avoid prosecution and declare black money by paying penalty only.

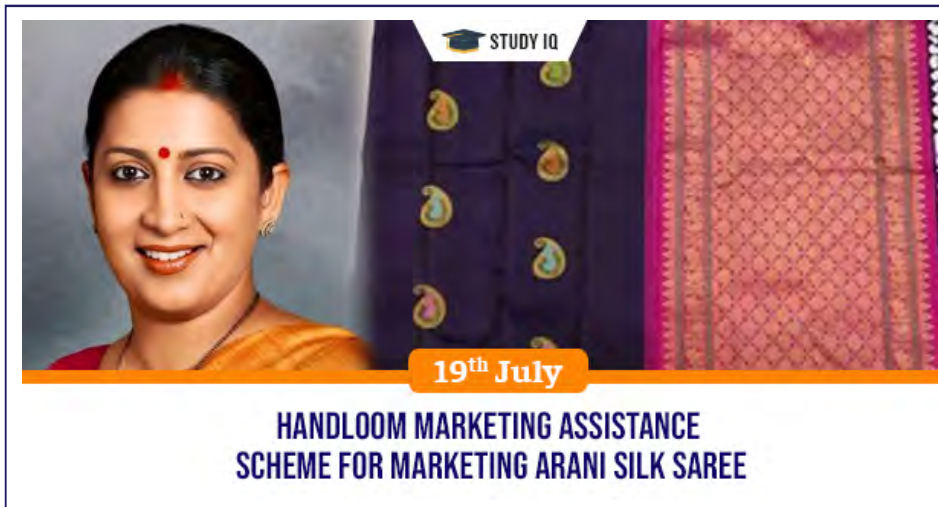
First: It was introduced as part of Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income And Assets) And Imposition of Tax Rules, 2015. Under it, window was provided to declare income and assets parked in foreign countries between July 2015 to September 2015.

Income Declaration Scheme (IDS): It was second such major initiative launched in May 2016. Under it, people with undisclosed income were given time between June 2016, to September 2016, to declare their income with a tax including penalty of 45% of the total undisclosed income. **Demonisation:** It was announced in November 2016. Government had demonetised high currency notes to fight black money.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana under which the government asked people with black money to pay 50% fine of the undisclosed income and deposit an additional 25% in government schemes which would be refunded without interest after four years. This scheme also expired on March 31, 2017.

Notes

Handloom Marketing Assistance Scheme for marketing Arani Silk Saree



Union Ministry of Textiles is implementing Handloom Marketing Assistance (HMA) Scheme for providing marketing facility to all the handloom products including Arani Silk saree. This information was given by the Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. Arani Sari is a traditional silk sari made in Arani, Tamil Nadu. It enjoys Geographical Indication Tag.

Handloom Marketing Assistance (HMA) Scheme

It is component of National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP). It provides marketing platform to the handloom weavers/organisations to sell their products directly to the consumers. It provides financial assistance to National Level Handloom Organisations and nominated handloom agencies of State Governments to organize marketing events like National Handloom Expos (NHEs), Special Handloom Expos (SHEs) and District Level Events (DLEs).

UGC launches Paramarsh Scheme



Union Minister for Human Resource Development (HRD) Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched Paramarsh Scheme of University Grants Commission (UGC). This scheme aims at mentoring National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) Accreditation Aspirant Institutions to promote Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

About Paramarsh Scheme

It aims to bring paradigm shift in the concept of mentoring of institution by another well performing institution to upgrade their academic performance and enable them to get accredited by focusing in area of curricular aspects, teaching-learning and evaluation, research, innovation, institutional values and practices etc.

Implementing Agency: University Grants Commission (UGC).

Coverage: It will target 1000 Higher Education Institutions for mentoring.

Hub & Spoke model: The Scheme will be operationalized through a "Hub & Spoke" model. Under it, the mentor institution (called Hub) is centralized and will have responsibility of guiding mentee institution (through secondary branches Spoke) through services provided to mentee for self improvement. This will allow centralized control over operational efficiency, resource utilization to attain overall development of the mentee institution.

Features: It will give mentee institution increased exposure and speedier adaptation to best practices. It will also facilitate sharing of knowledge, information and opportunities for research collaboration and faculty development in Mentee Institutions.

Significance: It will help in addressing national challenge of improving the quality of Higher Education in India. It will lead to enhancement of overall quality of mentee institutions and enhance its profile as a result of improved quality of research, teaching and learning methodologies.



Notes

STUDY IQ

Deeksharambh: UGC Guide to Student Induction Programme launched



Deeksharambh: Guide to Student Induction Programme (SIP) was released recently to help new students adjust and feel comfortable in the new environment at higher education institutions. It has been prepared by University Grants Commission (UGC).

Deeksharambh

It is guide to Student Induction Programm. It seeks to engage with the new students as soon as they come into the institution, before regular classes start.

Objectives: (i) Help new students adjust and feel comfortable in the new environment, (ii) inculcate in them the ethos and culture of the institution, (iii) help them build bonds with other students and faculty members, and (iv) expose them to a sense of larger purpose and self-exploration.

Purpose: It is intended to empower aspirant learners to face competitive world with confidence, open new horizons of life leading to character building based on universal human Values such as truth, righteous conduct, love, non-violence, peace and assist in developing self awareness , compassion and oneness.

Features: It engages with the new students as soon as they come into the institution, before regular classes start. It helps new students to learn about the institutional policies, processes, practices, culture and values, and their mentor groups are formed. Mentoring is one of its component to develop an everlasting bonding of teacher and student.

36 Proposals shortlisted for Solar Charkha Mission



Union Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) has notified that total 36 proposals have been shortlisted by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) from the proposals submitted by promoters agencies under Mission Solar Charkha.

Mission Solar Charkha

It has been launched by Union Ministry of MSME for implementation of 50 Solar Charkha Clusters across the country with budget of Rs. 550 crore for year 2018-19 and 2019-20

It envisages generating direct employment for nearly one lakh persons especially in rural areas and contribute to the green economy. Solar Charkha units have been classified as Village Industries. It also seeks to link five crore women across the country to the initiative.

Objectives of Scheme: (i) To ensure inclusive growth by generation of employment, especially for youth and women, and sustainable development through solar charkha clusters in rural areas. (ii) To boost rural economy and help in arresting migration from rural to urban areas. (iii) To leverage low-cost, innovative technologies and processes for sustenance.

Implementing agency: Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

Target: To cover 50 solar clusters across the country, whereby approx.1,00,000 artisans/beneficiaries are to be covered under various scheme components.

Coverage: It is being implemented in all States of India. The geographical distribution of these clusters is throughout country, with at least 10% located in J&K and hilly states, North Eastern Region (NER). It gives special focus to 117 aspirational districts for soliciting project proposals under it.

Notes

STUDY IQ

IEA praises Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana



International Energy Agency (IEA) has praised the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) for providing free cooking gas connection to poor. It noted that this welfare scheme is major achievement in improving the environment and health of women.

About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2016, in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh with tagline is Swachh Indhan, Behtar Jeevan.

Objective: Providing clean-cooking fuel to poor households, which are otherwise vulnerable to health hazards associated with indoor air pollution. Empowering women and safeguard their health by shifting them from traditional cooking based on unclean cooking fuels or fossil fuels to clean cooking gas.

Coverage: It is implemented in all the States/UTs. It was launched with the identification from the Socio Economic and Caste Census, but was subsequently expanded to cover all poor of the country.

Implementation: It is implemented by Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas through its Oil Marketing Companies (i.e., BPCL, IOC and HPCL) and their distributors network. *It is first welfare scheme implemented by Ministry of Power and Natural Gas.*

Intended beneficiaries: Adult woman member of BPL family, who is given deposit-free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs 1,600 per connection by the Centre.

Identification of Beneficiaries: It is done through Socio-Economic Caste Census List-2011 (SECC-2011) in consultation with state/UT governments. If names are not covered under SECC list, then beneficiaries are identified from 7 categories such as Most Backward Classes, SC/ST households, Forest Dwellers etc.

Present Implementation Status: So far, about 7.4 crore LPG connections have been given under this scheme. Government has set target to give 8 crore connections by 2020.

About International Energy Agency (IEA)

It is an inter-governmental organization that works to ensure reliable, affordable and clean energy for its 30 member countries and 8 association countries.

Establishment: In 1974 as per framework of OECD in the wake of 1973 oil crisis after OPEC cartel had shocked the world with steep increase in oil prices.

Headquarters (Secretariat): Paris, France.

Mandate: To act as a policy adviser in promoting alternate energy sources (including renewable energy), rational energy policies, and multinational energy technology co-operation.

Its mission is guided by four main areas ("4Es") of focus: energy security, economic development, environmental awareness (focused on mitigating climate change) and engagement worldwide.

It also seeks to promote rational energy policies, alternate energy sources (including renewable energy) and multinational energy technology co-operation.

Members: Only the OECD member states can become members of the IEA. Currently, it has 30 member countries and 8 association countries. India is associate member of IEA (not full member). Other associate members are Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Singapore and Thailand.

Publications/Reports: World Energy Outlook report.

Pencil Portal: 361 complaints of child labour resolved



Union Minister of Labour and Employment (I/C) Santosh Kumar Gangwar in written reply to question in Lok Sabha notified that so far 361 complaints of child labour have been resolved through PENCIL Portal. PENCIL stands for Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour.

About PENCIL Portal

It is a separate online portal launched in September 2019 to ensure effective enforcement of provisions of Child Labour Act and smooth implementation of National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme.

Components of PENCIL Portal: Child Tracking System, Complaint Corner, State Government, National Child Labour Project and Convergence.

Features: It connects Central Government to State Government(s), District(s), all Project Societies and General public. It also facilitates anyone to register online complaints regarding child labour. On receiving complaint, it is automatically assigned to concerned nodal officer for further necessary action.

Implementation agencies: Each district is mandated to nominate District Nodal Officers (DNOs) to complaints through this portal. DNOs are tasked to check genuineness of received complaint and take rescue measures in coordination with police (incase of genuine complaint) within 48 hours of receiving complaints.

About National Child Labour Project (NCLP)

It is central sector scheme for rehabilitation of child labour. It was launched in 1988. Under it, funds are provided directly to District Project Societies headed by District Magistrate/Collector/Deputy Commissioner who in turn allocates funds to NGOs/Voluntary Agencies, etc. for running of Special schools/rehabilitation/Training centres for rehabilitation of child labourers and mainstreaming them into formal schooling system. These centres also provide non-formal education, supplementary nutrition, vocational training and stipend to children withdrawn from employment.

Notes

STUDY IQ

JATAN: Virtual Museum software for digitizing archaeological museum



Union Minister of State (I/c) of Culture and Tourist Prahlad Singh Patel in a written reply in the Lok Sabha informed that digitization of Archaeological Museum across the country is being done through special software **JATAN** in a phased manner.

JATAN: Virtual Museum Builder Software

It is virtual museum software used for creating digital collections in various museums and digital archival tools that are used in background for managing National Portal and Digital Repository for Indian Museums. It has been developed and hosted by Human Centres Design and Computing (HCDC) Group, Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) Pune, as per agreement with Union Ministry of Culture.

Implementation status: Total 48 Archaeological Site Museums under Archaeological Survey of India will be digitised through JATAN. In phase I, two archaeological site museums, namely - Velha (Goa) and Nagarjunakonda (Andhra Pradesh) have been digitised. Rest 46 archaeological museums will be digitised in phase-wise manner.

About National Portal and Digital Repository for Indian Museums

It aims to digitize collections of museums to provide better access and information on various themes, national and regional histories and rich craftsmanship that is reflected in Indian art. It contains a vast and rich resource of the museum collections of India and their stories.

Rashtriya Aajeevika Mission



Union Minister for Rural Development in written reply recently informed Lok Sabha about the Rashtriya Aajeevika Mission. It was notified that Union Ministry of Rural Development is implementing Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) across the country in mission mode with objective of organizing the rural poor women into Self Help Groups (SHGs), and continuously nurturing and supporting them to take economic activities till they come out of abject poverty and attain appreciable increase in income over a period of time to improve their quality of life.

About Rashtriya Aajeevika Mission

It is poverty alleviation scheme implemented by Union Ministry of Rural Development to promote self-employment and organization of rural poor. It was launched in 2011 as National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and was succeeded by Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana in 2016.

It is supported by World Bank. It is one of world's largest initiatives to improve the livelihood of poor. It is being implemented across the country in a mission mode.

Objective: (i) Organizing rural poor women into SHGs, and continuously nurturing and supporting them to take economic activities so that they come out of abject poverty. (ii) To create efficient and effective institutional platforms for rural poor to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial

services. (iii) Help rural poor to set up self-employment ventures by ensuring easy access to credit. It organizes poor into SHGs and make them capable for self-employment.

Sub-schemes under DAY-NRLM

Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs): It enables a trainee to take bank credit and start his/her own Micro-enterprise.

Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP): It aims at facilitating rural poor for setting up of micro enterprises.

Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY): It aims to facilitate transport facilities in the rural areas which also provides self employment opportunities to the rural poor.

Notes

STUDY IQ

UKEIRI Mobility Programme: Study in India launched



New India-United Kingdom (UK) bilateral scheme named “UKEIRI Mobility Programme: Study in India” was launched on a pilot basis. Its objective is to fund students from UK to visit India and support Britain's universities to collaborate with Indian partners to send UK students to India during their studies.

About UKEIRI Mobility Programme: Study in India

It is an initiative of Universities UK International (UUKi) and British Council India. It aims to generate up to 200 opportunities for undergraduate students at UK universities to visit India by March 2021.

It will be funded by the UK and Indian governments as part of Phase 3 of UK-India Education Research Initiative (UKEIRI) and delivered by British Council India, Universities UK International (UUKI) and EdCIL in India. It will support national and institutional-level objectives to increase the levels of outward student mobility from UK to 13% by 2020, as set out in UUKi’s “Go International: Stand Out” campaign.

It will also support employability of UK graduates and help them prepare for globally competitive workforce as well as support internationalisation of Indian higher education through diversification of student body, and consolidation of inter-institutional partnerships.

1,40,134 Houses sanctioned under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana(Urban)



Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved construction of around 1,40,134 more affordable houses for benefit of urban poor from 8 States under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban). This approval was given in the 45th meeting of the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee held under Chairmanship of DurgaShanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. With this, cumulative number of houses sanctioned under PMAY(U) now is 85,11,574.

About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

It aims provide houses to all poor in urban areas by 2022, when the Nation completes 75 years of its Independence. It is new version of "Prime Minister's vision of Housing For All" by 2022.

Objective: To construct two crore houses across nation during its implementation period from 2015-2022.

Coverage: It covers entire urban area consisting of 4041 statutory towns with initial focus on 500 Class I cities.

Intended beneficiaries: Poor people (BPL) and People living under Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low income Group (LIG) categories in urban establishments of country. It also targets people living under middle income Group (MIG).

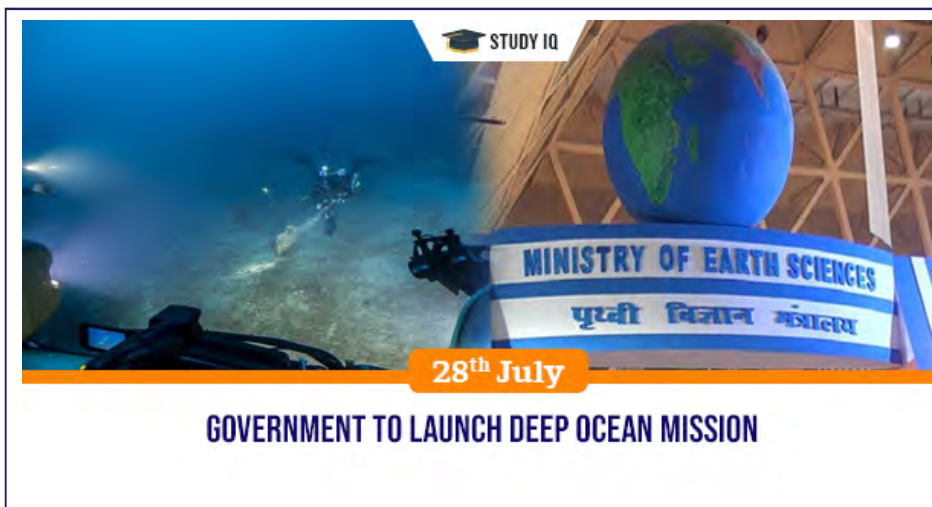
Central assistance will be provided to: Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and other implementing agencies through States/UTs for (i) in-situ rehabilitation of existing slum dwellers using land as a resource through private participation. (ii) Credit Linked Subsidy. (iii) Affordable Housing in Partnership. (iv) Subsidy for Beneficiary-led individual house construction/enhancement.

Funding: Credit linked subsidy component of this scheme is implemented as Central Sector Scheme while other three components will be implemented as Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).

Notes

STUDY IQ

Government to launch Deep Ocean Mission



Union Government has given in-principle approval to Deep Ocean Mission (DOM) and will be launched from October 31, 2019. It was announced on the occasion of foundation day function of Ministry of Earth Sciences (celebrated on July 27). The blueprint of Deep Ocean Mission (DOM) was released in July 2018. It will help India in leveraging blue economy for the country's overall economic growth. Government is focusing on blue economy in terms of sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth.

About Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)

It is five-year mission aimed at exploring deep ocean by emulating success of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in designing and launching satellites. Its major thrust is to help India harness various living and non-living (water, mineral and energy) resources from the seabed and deep water.

Implementing agency: Union Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Focus of DOM: It is on deep-sea mining, ocean climate change advisory services, underwater vehicles and underwater robotics related technologies.

Two key projects planned under it: Desalination plant powered by tidal energy and submersible vehicle that can explore depths of at least 6,000 metres with three people on board.

Tasks that will be undertaken: Deep-sea mining, survey, energy exploration and the offshore-based desalination.

Background

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India spreads over 2.2 million sq. km and deep sea, lies completely unexplored and unutilised to its potential to meet needs for overall economy. United Nations International Sea Bed Authority (UN-ISA) has allocated India site of 1,50,000 sq. km in Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) for exploitation of polymetallic nodules (PMN). These are rocks scattered on seabed containing iron, cobalt, nickel and manganese. It is envisaged that 10% of recovery of that large reserve can help India to meet energy requirement for next 100 years. It has been estimated that 380 million metric tonnes of PMN are available at the bottom of the seas in CIOB.

Notes

17 Iconic Tourist Sites to be developed into world class tourist destinations



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech (2019) had announced that 17 Iconic Tourist Sites in the country will be developed by Government into world class tourist destinations to serve as model for other sites to boost tourism potential.

About Iconic Tourist Sites Initiative

Objective: To develop these 17 monumnets (sites) into world class tourist destinations, to serve as a model for other tourism sites. It also aims at enhancing India's soft power.

17 Sites: Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri (Uttar Pradesh), Humayun's Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar (Delhi), Colva (Goa), Ajanta & Ellora (Maharashtra), Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Somnath and Dholavira (Gujarat), Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh), Hampi (Karnataka), Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu), Kaziranga (Assam), Kumarakom (Kerala) and the Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).

Implementation Strategy: It involves overall development of these from tourism point of view in and around these sites — which includes roads and infrastructure, hotels and lodges, connectivity and access. The development works will be undertaken as per international standards. The interventions in and around these monuments will have elements of universal accessibility, green technology, and enhanced security for tourists.

Implementing Agencies: Union Ministry of Tourism will be the nodal implementing agency. Besides it will also involve several other ministries, from Railways to Civil Aviation.



RRB JE-Mechanical (Tech+Nontech)

~~Rs.24,000~~

~~Rs.12,000~~

Rs.11,000



RRB JE - Electrical (Tech+Nontech)

~~Rs.24,000~~

~~Rs.12,000~~

Rs.11,000



RRB JE - Civil (Tech+Nontech)

~~Rs.24,000~~

~~Rs.12,000~~

Rs.11,000



RRB JE- Electronics (Tech+Nontech)

~~Rs.24,000~~

~~Rs.12,000~~

Rs.11,000



RRB Non-Tech Exams

~~Rs.13,000~~

~~Rs.8,000~~

Rs.6,300



RRB TC - Ticket Collector

~~Rs.22,000~~

~~Rs.12,500~~

Rs.10,500



ALP - Electrical

~~Rs.14,000~~

~~Rs.8,500~~

Rs.6,900



ALP Electronics & Comm

~~Rs.16,000~~

~~Rs.9,800~~

Rs.7,500

