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POSHAN Abhiyaan

- POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan in March 2018.
- It targets to reduce level of under-nutrition and other related problems by ensuring convergence of various nutrition related schemes.
- It also targets stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and low birth rate.
- It will monitor and review implementation of all such schemes and utilize existing structural arrangements of line ministries wherever available.
- Its large component involves gradual scaling-up of interventions supported by ongoing World Bank assisted Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Project (ISSNIP) to all districts in the country by 2022.

Major impact

- The programme through the targets will strive to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies.
- It targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
- Although the target to reduce Stunting is atleast 2% p.a., Mission would strive to achieve reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (Mission 25 by 2022).
- It will create synergy, ensure better monitoring, issue alerts for timely action, and encourage States/UT s to perform, guide and

supervise the line Ministries and States/UT s to achieve the targeted goals.

Benefits:

More than 10 crore people will be benefitted by this programme. All the States and districts will be covered in a phased manner i.e. 315 districts in 2017-18, 235 districts in 2018-19 and remaining districts in 2019-20 .

Exercise TROPEX

Why in news?

The day long review of TROPEX 2019 was undertaken to examine the conduct of exercise and to assess operational readiness of the Indian Navy.

Highlights:

- A realistic audit of the Indian Navy's deployment philosophy and fighting capability was undertaken during the review.
- Lessons learnt from the exercise will provide the Indian Navy accurate assessments to fine tune combat deployments, force structuring requirements, operational logistics as also material and training imperatives.

About Exercise TROPEX:

- Theatre Level Readiness and Operational Exercise (TROPEX) is an inter-service military exercise involving the participation of the Indian Army, Air Force, Navy and the Coast Guard.
- The exercise generally commences at the beginning of each year and lasts a month. It is generally carried out in three phases:

independent workup phase, joint workup phase and tactical phase.

- The exercise is designed to test the combat readiness of the Indian naval units, as well as the Indian Air Force, Indian Army and the Indian Coast Guard.
 - It also seeks to strengthen interoperability and joint operations in a complex environment.
 - Beginning in 2005, the exercise has been held annually, with the exception of 2016. The last edition of the exercise was conducted in 2017.
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Floor test

Why in news?

Chief Minister of Goa, Pramod Sawant asked the Governor to summon the Assembly for a floor test on Wednesday to prove the majority of the BJP-led coalition government.

What is a floor test?

- A floor test is primarily taken to know whether the executive enjoys the confidence of the legislature. It is a constitutional mechanism under which a Chief Minister appointed by the Governor can be asked to prove majority on the floor of the Legislative Assembly of the state. As per the Constitution, the Chief Minister is appointed by the Governor of the state.
- When a single party secures the majority of the seats in the house, the Governor appoints the leader of the party as the Chief Minister.
- In case the majority is questioned, the leader of the party which claims majority has to move a vote of confidence and prove majority among those present and voting.
- The Chief Minister has to resign if they fail to prove their majority in the house. This happens both in the parliament and the state legislative assemblies.

- In situations when there are differences within a coalition government, the Governor can ask the Chief Minister to prove majority in the house.

What is composite floor test?

- There is another test, Composite Floor Test, which is conducted only when more than one person stakes claim to form the government.
 - When the majority is not clear, the governor might call for a special session to see who has the majority.
 - The majority is counted based on those present and voting. This can also be done through a voice vote where the member can respond orally or through division voting. Some legislators may be absent or choose not to vote.
 - In division vote, voting can be done through electronic gadgets, ballots or slips. The person who has the majority will form the government. In case of tie, the speaker can also cast his vote.
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Mizoram Assembly passes bill to detect illegal foreigners

Why in news?

The Mizoram Assembly Monday unanimously passed a bill that seeks to detect foreigners illegally residing in the north-eastern state, that shares an over 700-km border with Bangladesh and Myanmar.

About the bill:

- Introducing **The Mizoram Maintenance of Household Registers Bill, 2019**, Chief Minister Zoramthanga said the influx of foreigners into the state through its porous borders has remained a serious concern for several decades.
- The measures proposed under legislation are intended to provide credible individual identification system and to prevent "usurpation"

of benefits of developmental schemes by those who are not entitled.

- It defines "citizens" as a person registered as such, or having requisite qualification as prescribed under the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Need:

- The chief minister said that in many cases the benefits of development are found to have been eaten away to a large extent by such foreigners who "clandestinely" stayed back and got assimilated among the people of the state by taking advantage of the mistaken identity and of difficulties in detecting them.
 - Even the Supreme Court has expressed concern over such continuous influx of foreigners and their assimilation in the mainstream and it was felt imperative by the state to invoke its legislative powers to enact a suitable law.
 - Such influx had resulted in abnormal increase in the population which posed a serious threat to law and order as well as the state's internal security.
 - CM said the update is required for improvement of the system of delivery of benefits of welfare schemes as well for security purposes, by way of enumerations and verification from time to time.
 - The Centre had mooted a system of National Register of Indian Citizens and issue of multi-purpose national identity cards based on such a register. It had also suggested this before the apex court.
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West Nile fever

Why in news?

The Health Department has issued an alert in Malappuram after a six-year-old boy from the district undergoing treatment for West Nile fever died at the Government Medical College Hospital.

About West Nile fever:

- Health experts claimed this could be the first confirmed death in the State due to the relatively unknown **viral infection that leads to neurological diseases**.
- **Birds are the natural hosts of the virus and vaccine is not available for it.**
- According to the World Health Organization, this **viral infection is most often the result of mosquito bites**. Mosquitoes are infected when they feed on birds, which circulate the virus.
- It may also be **transmitted through contact** with other infected animals, their blood, or other tissues.
- Symptoms of the virus infection include cold, fever, fatigue and nausea.

Suspected case:

- There had been a suspected case of the infection last year in Kozhikode district but the National Institute of Virology had not confirmed it.
- There is an increased surveillance **on encephalitis** cases after last **year's Nipah outbreak** in Kozhikode, which could have helped in diagnosis, the experts added.
- The private and government hospitals had been directed to report suspected fever cases.
- The Animal Husbandry Department would keep a surveillance on birds, especially in areas such as **the Kadalundy bird sanctuary**, which was frequented by a large number of migratory birds.

No need to panic:

- Kerala Health Minister told the media that there was no need to panic and steps were being taken to prevent the virus spreading to others.
- The Director of Health Services had been asked to take steps to contain the virus.
- The Union Health Ministry had last week sent a four-member team from the National Centre for Disease Control to Malappuram and it collected vector and bird samples from the boy's premises.
- As the presence **of Culex mosquitoes**, which spread the infection, has been found from there, the Health Department is coordinating with the local bodies.

Monitoring mechanism

Why in news?

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has pulled up the Union Environment Ministry for not furnishing proper data on monitoring mechanism for compliance of conditions of environment clearance granted by the Ministry.

Precautionary principle:

- The data furnished is wholly inadequate to evaluate the effectiveness of functioning of mechanism.
- Adequate mechanism is the mandate of “precautionary principle” and “sustainable development” to be enforced by this tribunal.
- It appears that either the data is being withheld or the response of the officer is otherwise inadequate.
- The observations came following submissions by the Ministry that a mechanism existed to periodically monitor the compliance of environmental clearance conditions which was being strengthened.
- The tribunal had in January directed the MoEF to furnish data on the same following which it submitted that a total of 6,779 projects were monitored between 2013-2014 and 2018-19.
- The Ministry informed the Bench that while in 2013-14, 843 projects were monitored, in 2018-19, it was 1,002.

Extent of defaults:

- The data merely mentions figures of the projects monitored, without mentioning the extent of defaults found and further action taken, in absence of which the effectiveness of monitoring mechanism cannot be assessed.
- Following the observations, the NGT asked the officer concerned to be present before the tribunal with the “entire relevant data”.

Repeat MPs' assets rose 142%

Why in news?

The average financial assets of 153 re-elected Lok Sabha MPs grew by 142%, from ₹5.5 crore in 2009 to ₹13.32 crore in 2014, according to an analysis by National Election Watch and the Association for Democratic Reforms.

Findings of the analysis:

- E. T. Mohammed Basheer of the IUML declared the highest jump of 2,018% (an almost 22-fold surge), followed by the TMC's Sisir Kumar Adhikari with 1,700%. The figure for AIADMK parliamentarian P. Venugopal went up by 1,281%.
- However, there were also a few parliamentarians whose financial assets registered a sharp decline: the biggest drop of 67% was reported by the CPI (M)'s P. Karunakaran.
- Financial details of 153 sitting re-elected MPs fielded by various political parties have been taken from the recently filed affidavits by these MPs and the values of these financial assets have been compared to the corresponding values of the assets that the MPs showed in their affidavits from the previous elections.

Life imprisonment is the rule, death penalty is the exception

Why in news?

If a court finds it difficult to make a choice between death penalty and life imprisonment, it should opt for the lesser punishment, the Supreme

Court said in a recent judgment.

About the Judgment:

- Life imprisonment is the rule to which the death penalty is the exception.
 - The death sentence must be imposed only when life imprisonment appears to be an altogether inappropriate punishment, having regard to the relevant facts and circumstances of the crime.
 - The judgment was based on an appeal filed by a man sentenced to death for the rape and murder of a five-year-old in Madhya Pradesh.
 - He had promised her family to drop her at school where his own daughter was studying, but the victim did not return home that day. The school authorities informed the parents about the absence of the child. Her body was found in a well.
 - Both the trial and high courts concluded the man, Sachin Kumar Singhraha, deserves death.
 - Writing the judgment for the Bench, Justice Shantanagoudar agreed the man has indeed committed a horrifying crime.
 - It was both heinous and premeditated. He had gained the trust of the victim's family on a false pretext. His intention was to gain custody of the child. By this, he had not only abused the faith reposed in him but also "exploited the innocence and helplessness of a child as young as five years of age.
 - At the same time, Justice Shantanagoudar said there is a probability that the man would reform, considering he never had prior criminal record. The court also kept in mind his "overall conduct".
 - With regard to the totality of the facts and circumstances of the case, we are of the opinion that the crime in question may not fall under the category of cases where the death sentence is necessarily to be imposed.
 - But having commuted his death sentence, the apex court said a life imprisonment simplicitor would be grossly inadequate. Instead, it ordered, the convict to serve his life imprisonment with a minimum of 25 years' imprisonment without remission.
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Acid attack an uncivilised, heartless crime

Why in news?

The Supreme Court was deciding an appeal filed by the Himachal Pradesh government against a March 2018 judgment of the State high court, which reduced their 10-year jail term by half.

About the Judgment:

- A crime of this nature does not deserve any kind of clemency. This court cannot be oblivious of the situation that the victim must have suffered an emotional distress which cannot be compensated either by sentencing the accused or by grant of any compensation.
- The Bench ordered two men, who have already suffered a five-year imprisonment for throwing acid on a 19-year-old girl, to pay her ₹1.5 lakh compensation each.
- The victim was attacked while on her way to college in July 2004. They came on a two-wheeler and threw acid at her. She suffered 16% burns. The court said it must have been the “darkest day of her life”.
- The apex court further directed the State to pay compensation to the girl under the **victim compensation scheme** and deposit the same before the trial court within three months.

Supreme Court Directions:

- The Supreme Court had, in April **2015 in the Laxmi case**, passed several far-reaching directions, some of which include making the private health industry responsible for providing mandatory and free care to acid attack victims.
- The court had also made private hospitals across the country liable to provide full and free medical treatment to victims.
- The term ‘treatment’ included reconstructive surgery, free medicines, bed, rehabilitation and aftercare.
- The court had directed State governments to take action in cases of private hospitals turning away victims.

- The Supreme Court had further mandated all States **to fix ₹3 lakh as minimum compensation for victims.**
 - It had directed the Home and Health Ministries, and the National Legal Services Authority to take up the issue with the State governments.
 - Noting that adequate publicity should be given to the **Acid Attacks Victims Compensation Scheme**, the court had directed that district judges should appoint committees comprising the local Magistrate, district police chief and Chief Medical Officer to deal with complaints of victims about compensation.
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Maldives reaffirms 'India first' policy

Why in news?

The Maldives reaffirmed its “India-First Policy”, saying it looks forward to working closely with India on all issues and will remain sensitive towards its security and strategic concerns as External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held talks with the country’s top leadership.

Commitment to support India’s efforts:

- The Maldivian leaders also expressed commitment to support India’s efforts to combat terrorism, particularly cross-border terrorism, and crimes such as piracy, organised crime, narcotic drugs and human trafficking.
- Swaraj arrived here on Sunday on a two-day visit, the first full-fledged bilateral trip to the strategically located Indian Ocean island nation after the government of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih came to power in November last year.
- The External Affairs Minister and Solih took stock of the progress made in bilateral ties since his visit to India in December 2018.
- Swaraj and her Maldivian counterpart Shahid during their meeting discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and also noted the

number of high- level exchanges between the two countries over the past three months.

Govt.'s prerogative to frame schemes

Why in news?

It is the sole prerogative of the government to frame schemes and courts should stay out of governance, the Supreme Court has said in a judgment.

About the Judgment:

- A Bench led by Justice A.M. Sapre criticised the Uttarakhand High Court for framing a scheme to regularise hundreds of casual workers engaged by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under the Ministry of Defence in the construction of roads for Char Dham Yatra pilgrimage.
- The High Court failed to see that it is not the function of the courts to frame any scheme but it is the sole prerogative of the government to do it.
- All that the High Court, in exercise of its **extraordinary power under Article 226** of the Constitution, can do is to direct the government to consider framing an appropriate scheme.
- Such directions to the government to “consider” framing a scheme should be with regard to the facts and circumstances of each case.
- It is only in exceptional cases when the court considers it proper, should it issue appropriate mandatory directions.
- Instead, in the present case, a single judge of the **High Court framed a scheme itself to regularise the services of the casual labourers** and granted them benefits similar to those of regular employees under the labour law.
- The case was filed in the High Court by unions representing the casual workers, including the All India Trade Union Congress. They

submitted that the Centre had not regularised the labourers though they had worked for BRO for years.

Japan to make crater on asteroid

Why in news?

Japan's space agency said that its **Hayabusa2 spacecraft** will drop an explosive on an asteroid to make a crater and then collect underground samples for possible clues to the **origin of the solar system**.

About the Project:

- The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said that Hayabusa2 will drop an impactor of the size of a baseball weighing 2 kg on the **asteroid, named Ryugu**, on April 5 to collect samples from deeper underground that have not been exposed to the sun or space rays.
- The mission will require the spacecraft to move quickly to the other side of the asteroid so it won't get hit by flying shards from the blast.
- While moving away, Hayabusa2 will leave a camera to capture the outcome. Scientists will then analyse details of the crater to determine the history of the asteroid.

Anti-profiteering body

Why in news?

- Consumer complaints are not the only trigger for the National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA) to act, said its chairman B.N. Sharma.
- Mock purchases can be made by NAA offices to check a trader's invoice for profiteering.
- This invoice could later be cancelled and the cancelled invoice be

taken cognisance of for checking out matters if need be.

- The NAA was set up under Section 171 of the Central GST Act, 2017 to check whether trade and industry were passing on rate reductions under the Goods and Services (GST) Tax.
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