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Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

1. **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission**
The National Health Authority has announced the integration of its flagship Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission with the Aarogya Setu app, allowing users to create the 14-digit unique Ayushman Bharat Health Account numbers from the app.

**About the Mission:**
The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission will provide a digital health ID to the people who will hold their health records.

**Features of the Mission:**
1. It is a digital health ecosystem under which every Indian citizen will now have unique health IDs, digitised health records with identifiers for doctors and health facilities.
2. The scheme will come under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
3. It comprises six key building blocks — HealthID, DigiDoctor, Health Facility Registry, Personal Health Records, e-Pharmacy and Telemedicine.
4. The National Health Authority has been given the mandate to design, build, roll-out and implement the mission in the country.
5. The core building blocks of the mission is that the health ID, DigiDoctor and Health Facility Registry shall be owned, operated and maintained by the Government of India.
6. Private stakeholders will have an equal opportunity to integrate and create their own products for the market. The core activities and verifications, however, remain with the government.
7. Under the Mission, every Indian will get a Health ID card that will store all medical details of the person including prescriptions, treatment, diagnostic reports and discharge summaries.
8. Health ID is a randomly generated 14 digit number used for the purposes of uniquely identifying persons, authenticating them, and threading their health records (only with their informed consent) across multiple systems and stakeholders.
9. The citizens will be able to give their doctors and health providers one-time access to this data during visits to the hospital for consultation.

2. **Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission**
   - The scheme aims at strengthening healthcare infrastructure across the country.
   - Its objective is to fill gaps in public health infrastructure, especially in critical care facilities and primary care in both urban and rural areas.
   - Through this, critical care services will be available in all the districts of the country with more than five lakh population through exclusive critical care hospital blocks, while the remaining districts will be covered through referral services.
   - People will have access to a full range of diagnostic services in the public healthcare system through a network of laboratories across the country, and integrated public health labs will be set up in all the districts.
   - Integrated public health labs will also be set up in all districts, giving people access to “a full range of diagnostic services” through a network of laboratories across the country.

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission was launched on 15th August 2020 as a pilot in six Union Territories - Andaman & Nicobar, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Ladakh, Lakshadweep and Puducherry.

The pilot phase of ABDM was successfully conducted between 15th August 2020 to 27th September 2021.
• An IT-enabled disease surveillance system will be established through a network of surveillance laboratories at block, district, regional and national levels.
• All the public health labs will be connected through the Integrated Health Information Portal, which will be expanded to all states and UTs.

3. **Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY**

The National Health Authority (NHA), the apex body for implementing the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), has revised the Health Benefit Package (HBP) Master under the scheme.

In the revised version of Health Benefit Package (HBP 2.2):
- Rates of some packages have been increased by 20% to 400% under the PM-JAY.
- Rates of around 400 procedures have been revised and one new additional medical management package related to black fungus has also been added.

**Key Features of PM-JAY:**
1. The world's largest health insurance/assurance scheme fully financed by the government.
2. It provides cover of 5 lakhs per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and private empaneled hospitals in India.
3. Coverage: Over 10.74 crore poor and vulnerable entitled families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) are eligible for these benefits.
4. Provides cashless access to health care services for the beneficiary at the point of service.
5. The National Health Authority (NHA) is the nodal agency responsible for the nationwide roll-out and implementation of the AB-PMJAY scheme.
6. This scheme is a Centrally sponsored scheme with some Central sector components.

**Eligibility:**
1. No restrictions on family size, age or gender.
2. All pre–existing conditions are covered from day one.
3. Covers up to 3 days of pre-hospitalization and 15 days post-hospitalization expenses such as diagnostics and medicines.
4. Benefits of the scheme are portable across the country.
5. Services include approximately 1,393 procedures covering all the costs related to treatment, including but not limited to drugs, supplies, diagnostic services, physician’s fees, room charges, surgeon charges, OT and ICU charges etc.
6. Public hospitals are reimbursed for the healthcare services at par with the private hospitals.

4. **Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 4.0**

- Union health minister launched the Intensified Mission Indradhanush 4.0 that aims to protect children and pregnant women from life-threatening diseases.
- Children up to two years will be covered in this drive.
- The government is implementing the largest inoculation drive globally where annually over 3 crore pregnant women and 2.6 crore children are covered through the Universal Immunisation Programme.
- The mission Indradhanush 4.0 will have three rounds and will be conducted in 416 districts across 33 states and UTs.
About IMI 3.0:
It is a campaign aimed to reach those children and pregnant women who have been missed out or been left out of the Routine Immunisation Programme.

- This is aimed to accelerate the full immunisation of children and pregnant women through a mission mode intervention.
- Beneficiaries from migration areas and hard to reach areas were targeted as they may have missed their vaccine doses during the pandemic.

Classification of districts:
As per the guidelines released for IMI 3.0, the districts have been classified to reflect 313 low risk; 152 medium risk; and 250 high risk districts.

What is the Mission Indradhanush?
'Mission Indradhanush' was launched by the Government of India in December 2014.

- It was aimed to strengthen and re-energize the programme and achieve full immunization coverage for all children and pregnant women.
- 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.
- It provides vaccination against 12 Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (VPD) i.e. diphtheria, Whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, meningitis and pneumonia, Haemophilus influenzae type B infections, Japanese encephalitis (JE), rotavirus vaccine, pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) and measles-rubella (MR).
  - However, vaccination against Japanese Encephalitis and Haemophilus influenzae type B is being provided in selected districts of the country.
- Mission Indradhansuh was also identified as one of the flagship schemes under Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (16,850 villages across 541 districts) and Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (48,929 villages across 112 aspirational districts).

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0:
‘Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0’ was launched on October 31, 2019 to ensure that not a single child in the country misses out on vaccination.

- It had a special focus on improving coverage in areas with “low” immunisation.
- Through ‘IMI 2.0’, the health ministry aims to reach each and every child below the age of two years and all pregnant women still uncovered/partially covered in 271 districts of the country.

5. Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi
- Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi will be a single non-lapsable reserve fund for share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess.
- The accruals into the PMSSN will be utilised for the flagship schemes of the Health Ministry including Ayushman Bharat–Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) and National Health Mission and Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) and also disaster preparedness, and responses during health emergencies.
- In any financial year, the expenditure on such schemes of the Health Ministry would be initially incurred from the PMSSN and thereafter, from Gross Budgetary Support (GBS).

Significance:
The major benefit will be enhanced access to universal and affordable health care through availability of earmarked resources, while ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of financial year.
Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers

1. Pradhan Mantri Jan-Aushadhi Yojana

PM Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana has achieved the target of opening 8,300 kendras for FY22 in just 6 months.

Background:
With a vision to provide quality medicines at an affordable rate to the common man especially the poor, the Government has set a target to increase the number of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs) to 10,000 by March 2024. As on October 05, 2021, the number of stores has increased to 8355.

Performance of the scheme:
● All the districts of the country have been covered under the scheme.
● Effective IT-enabled logistics and supply-chain systems for ensuring real-time distribution of medicines at all outlets have also been introduced.
● Product basket of PMBJP presently comprises 1,451 drugs and 240 surgical instruments.

About PMBJP:
It is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
● It seeks to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendra’s known as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra.
● Initially launched in 2008, the scheme was rechristened in 2015.
● The Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI) is implementing the scheme.

Key features of the scheme:
1. Ensure access to quality medicines.
2. Extend coverage of quality generic medicines so as to reduce the out of pocket expenditure on medicines and thereby redefine the unit cost of treatment per person.
3. Create awareness about generic medicines through education and publicity so that quality is not synonymous with only high price.
4. A public programme involving Government, PSUs, Private Sector, NGO, Societies, Co-operative Bodies and other Institutions.
5. Create demand for generic medicines by improving access to better healthcare through low treatment cost and easy availability wherever needed in all therapeutic categories.

World Health Organization – Good Manufacturing Practices (WHO-GMP):
Under the Scheme, medicines are procured from World Health Organization – Good Manufacturing Practices (WHO-GMP) certified suppliers for ensuring the quality of the products. Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP, also referred to as ‘cGMP’ or ‘current Good Manufacturing Practice’) is the aspect of quality assurance that ensures that medicinal products are consistently produced and controlled to the quality standards appropriate to their intended use and as required by the product specification.

● GMP also has legal components, covering responsibilities for distribution, contract manufacturing and testing, and responses to product defects and complaints.
Ministry of Education

1. **National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS)**
   The Ministry of Education has approved the continuation of National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship (NMMSS) over the 15th Finance Commission cycle for a period of five years i.e. from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
   - It is a central Sector Scheme, launched in 2008-09 to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to reduce drop-outs in class VIII.
   - The scheme envisages award of one lakh fresh scholarships every year to selected students of class IX and their continuation/renewal in classes X to XII for study in a State Government, Government-aided and Local body schools under the scheme.

2. **NEAT 3.0:**
   The Union Education Minister launched National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) 3.0, a single platform to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions and courses to students of the country.
   - The Ministry of Education had announced NEAT as a Public-Private partnership model between the Government (through its implementing agency AICTE) and the Education Technology companies across India.
   - It is an initiative to provide the use of best-developed technological solutions in the education sector to enhance the employability of the youth on a single platform for learners' convenience.
   - These solutions use artificial intelligence for a personalised and customised learning experience for better learning outcomes and skill development in niche areas.

**NEAT:**
   - National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) is an initiative to provide the use of best-developed technological solutions in the education sector to enhance the employability of the youth on a single platform for learners’ convenience.
   - These solutions use Artificial Intelligence for a personalized and customized learning experience for better learning outcomes and skill development in the niche areas.
   - AICTE, MoE is acting as the facilitator in the process while ensuring that the solutions are freely available to a large number of socially and economically backward students.
   - NEAT has 58 Education Technology Companies with 100 products that help to develop employable skills, capacity building, and bridge learning gaps.

3. **Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA)**
   Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2021 was released recently.

Atal Innovation Rankings 2021:
ARIIA 2021 classifies participating institutions into two major categories; technical and non-technical. Further, these rankings have been divided into seven sub-categories.

**Technical:**
   - Top 3: This is the third time that IIT Madras has secured the first rank. IIT Bombay and IIT Delhi were placed at the second and third ranks respectively.

Non-technical institutions:
The top central universities under this category include Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Delhi, and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kozhikode.

The rankings have been prepared after evaluating the participating institutions under nine parameters:

1. Developing an innovative and entrepreneurial mindset through a series of activities.
2. Teaching and learning: Academic programmes related to innovation and entrepreneurship (I & E) and IPR offered by the HEI.
3. Dedicated infrastructure and facilities to promote innovation and entrepreneurship at HEI.
4. Generation of innovations/ideas with the support of HEI and recognition received.
5. Ventures established with the support of the HEI and recognitions received.
6. Angel and VC fund/investment mobilized to support innovation and startups incubated at HEI, Promotion of collaboration for and co-creation of I&E initiatives.
8. Annual budget on promoting and supporting I&E activities: Total expenses towards I&E and IPR support activities, total revenue generated by HEI from incubation services to startups and commercialization of IP and innovations.
9. Participation of HEI in I&E initiative of MOE.

About ARIIA:
It is an initiative by the Ministry of Education.
Implemented by AICTE and the Ministry’s Innovation Cell.
Objective: To systematically rank all major higher educational institutions and universities in India.

4. PM Poshan Shakti Nirman Scheme
The existing Mid-Day Meal scheme, which provides hot meals to students, has been renamed as the National Scheme for PM Poshan Shakti Nirman.

Key propositions in the PM POSHAN Scheme:
Supplementary nutrition: The new scheme has a provision for supplementary nutrition for children in aspirational districts and those with high prevalence of anaemia.
States to decide diet: It essentially does away with the restriction on the part of the Centre to provide funds only for wheat, rice, pulses and vegetables. Currently, if a state decides to add any component like milk or eggs to the menu, the Centre does not bear the additional cost. Now that restriction has been lifted.
Nutri-gardens: They will be developed in schools to give children “firsthand experience with nature and gardening”.
Women and FPOs: To promote vocals for local, women self-help groups and farmer producer organisations will be encouraged to provide a fillip to locally grown traditional food items.
Social Audit: The scheme also plans “inspection” by students of colleges and universities for ground-level execution.
Tithi-Bhojan: Communities would also be encouraged to provide the children food at festivals etc, while cooking festivals to encourage local cuisines are also envisaged.
DBTs to school: In other procedural changes meant to promote transparency and reduce leakages, States will be asked to do direct benefit cash transfers of cooking costs to individual school accounts, and honorarium amounts to the bank accounts of cooks and helpers.
Holistic nutrition: The rebranded scheme aims to focus on “holistic nutrition” goals. Use of locally grown traditional foods will be encouraged, along with school nutrition gardens.

About the Mid-Day meal scheme:
The scheme guarantees one meal to all children in government and aided schools and madrasas supported under Samagra Shiksha.
- Students up to Class VIII are guaranteed one nutritional cooked meal at least 200 days in a year.
- It was launched in the year 1995 as the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP – NSPE), a centrally sponsored scheme. In 2004, the scheme was relaunched as the Mid Day Meal Scheme.
- The Scheme is also covered by the National Food Security Act, 2013.

Objective:
Address hunger and malnutrition, increase enrolment and attendance in school, improve socialisation among castes, provide employment at grassroots level especially to women.

The MDM rules 2015, provide that:
- The place of serving meals to the children shall be school only.
- If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.
- The School Management Committee mandated under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 shall also monitor implementation of the Mid-day meal Scheme.

Nutritional norms:
In terms of calorie intake, as per the MDM guidelines, the children in primary schools must be provided with at least 450 calories with 12 grams of protein through MDM while the children in upper primary schools should get 700 calories with 20 grams of protein, as per MHRD.

The food intake per meal by the children of primary classes, as provided by MHRD is 100 grams of food grains, 20 grams of pulses, 50 grams of vegetables and 5 grams of oils and fats. For the children of upper-primary schools, the mandated breakup is 150 grams of food grains, 30 grams of pulses, 75 grams of vegetables and 7.5 grams of oils and fats.

5. 'Samagra Shiksha Scheme 2.0'
The Centre has approved the continuation of the 'Samagra Shiksha Scheme' for school education for the next five years till March 31, 2026. The scheme has been revamped with the addition of new Components/initiatives based on the recommendations of the NEP 2020.

Components of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) 2.0:
1. In order to enhance the direct outreach of the scheme, all child-centric interventions will be provided directly to the students through DBT [or direct benefit transfer] mode on an IT-based platform over a period of time.
2. This DBT would include RTE entitlements such as textbooks, uniforms and transport allowance.
3. Keeping with the NEP’s recommendations on encouraging Indian languages, it has a new component for appointment of language teachers, which includes salaries, and training costs as well as bilingual books and teaching learning material.
4. It will have the NIPUN Bharat initiative for foundational literacy and numeracy, which will get an annual provision of ₹500 per child for learning materials, ₹150 per teacher for manuals and resources and ₹10-20 lakh per district for assessment.
5. As part of digital initiatives, there is a provision for ICT labs and smart classrooms, including support for digital boards, virtual classrooms and DTH channels.
6. It includes a provision to support out of school children from age 16 to 19 with funding of ₹2000 per grade to complete their education via open schooling.
7. It also has a provision for an incentive of up to ₹25000 for schools that have two medal-winning students at the Khelo India school games at the national level.

Samagra Shiksha:
1. Samagra Shiksha is an integrated scheme for school education extending from pre-school to class XII to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.
2. It subsumes the three Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
3. The main emphasis of the Scheme is on improving the quality of school education by focussing on the two T’s – Teacher and Technology.
4. The scheme mainly aims to support States in the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
5. The Scheme is being implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. It involves a 60:40 split in funding between the Centre and most States.

6. NIPUN Bharat Programme
   ● NIPUN stands for the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy.
   ● The Programme is an initiative of the Ministry of Education.
   ● It will be implemented by the Department of School Education and Literacy.
   ● Target: It has been envisioned for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.
   ● It will cover the learning needs of children in the age group of 3 to 9 years.

Implementation:
A five-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at the National- State- District- Block- School level in all States and UTs, under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha.

Focus areas:
1. The mission focuses on different domains of development like physical and motor development, socio-emotional development, literacy and numeracy development, cognitive development, life skills etc. for Holistic development of the child.
2. It is envisaged to support and encourage students, along with their schools, teachers, parents, and communities, in every way possible, to help realise the true potential of children and propel the country to new heights.

Key components and expected outcomes of NIPUN Bharat Mission:
1. Foundational skills enable to keep children in class thereby reducing the dropouts and improve transition rate from primary to upper primary and secondary stages.
2. Activity based learning and a conducive learning environment will improve the quality of education.
3. Innovative pedagogies such as toy-based and experiential learning will be used in classroom transactions thereby making learning a joyful and engaging activity.
4. Intensive capacity building of teachers will make them empowered and provide greater autonomy for choosing the pedagogy.

7. Academic Bank of Credit
The Government unveiled Academic Bank of Credit (ABC), under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Academic Bank of Credit is envisaged as a digital bank that holds the credit earned by a student in any course. It is a major instrument for facilitating multidisciplinary and holistic education and multiple entry and exit in higher education.

www.insightsonindia.com
What is the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)?
Set-up by the University Grants Commission (UGC).
- Under the ABC, students will be given multiple entry and exit options.
- This enables students to leave a degree or course and get a corresponding certification and rejoin studies after a certain time and be able to start from where they had left.
- It will also provide students with the flexibility to move between institutes while pursuing one degree or leave a course.

How does it work?
ABC will keep records of the academic credits of a student. It will not accept any credit course document directly from the students for any course they might be pursuing, but only from higher education institutes, who will have to make deposits in students’ accounts.

Benefits:
ABC will help in credit verification, credit accumulation, credit transfer and redemption of students, and promotion of the students.

8. Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) project
Ministry of Education, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), and World Bank have signed an agreement for the financial support worth Rs 5718 crore towards the implementation of the Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) project.

About the Project:
STARS stands for Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS). STARS project would be implemented as a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education.
It is a project to improve the quality and governance of school education in six Indian states.
- Six states are: Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan.
- Some 250 million students (between the age of 6 and 17) in 1.5 million schools, and over 10 million teachers will benefit from the program.
- The overall focus and components of the STARS project are aligned with the objectives of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of Quality Based Learning Outcomes.
- The STARS project also aims to focus on initiatives of PM e-Vidya, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission and National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

Reform initiatives under the project include:
1. Focusing more directly on the delivery of education services at the state, district and sub district levels by providing customized local-level solutions towards school improvement.
2. Addressing demands from stakeholders, especially parents, for greater accountability and inclusion by producing better data to assess the quality of learning; giving special attention to students from vulnerable section.
3. Equipping teachers to manage this transformation by recognizing that teachers are central to achieving better learning outcomes.
4. Investing more in developing India’s human capital needs by strengthening foundational learning for children in classes 1 to 3 and preparing them with the cognitive, socio-behavioural and language skills to meet future labour market needs.

Unique components of the project:
Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC):
The project includes a Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC) under the National Component which would enable it to be more responsive to any natural, man-made and health disasters.

- It will help the government respond to situations leading to loss of learning such as school closures/infrastructure damage, inadequate facilities and use technology for facilitating remote learning etc.
- The CERC component would facilitate the rapid re-categorization of financing and the utilization of streamlined financing request procedures.

**PARAKH:**
A major component of the project is the establishment of PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) as a National Assessment Centre.

- Included in the National Education Policy 2020, this autonomous institution under the Union Education Ministry will set norms for student assessment and evaluation for all school boards across the country, most of which currently follow norms set by State governments.
- It will also guide standardised testing to monitor learning outcomes at the State and national levels, according to the NEP.

**9. Institutions of Eminence scheme**
The University Grants Commission (UGC) has amended its regulations, allowing Institutions of Eminence (IoEs) to set up campuses abroad after receiving no objection certificates from the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs.

- The amendments also permit the IOEs to start new off campus centres, with a maximum of three in five years and not more than one in an academic year.

What are the Institutions of Eminence (IoEs)?
Institutions of Eminence scheme has been launched in order to implement the commitment of the Government to empower the Higher Educational Institutions and to help them become world class teaching and research institutions.

- The scheme was announced by the Finance Minister in his budget speech of 2016.
- This will enhance affordable access to high quality education for ordinary Indians.

About the IoEs scheme:
Launched in order to empower the Higher Educational Institutions and to help them become world-class teaching and research institutions.

**Objectives:**

- **Excellence and Innovation:** To provide for higher education leading to excellence and innovations in such branches of knowledge as may be deemed fit at post-graduate, graduate and research degree levels.
- **Specialization:** To engage in areas of specialization to make distinctive contributions to the objectives of the university education system.
- **Global Rating:** To aim to be rated internationally for its teaching and research as a top hundred Institution in the world over time.
- **Quality teaching and Research:** To provide for high quality teaching and research and for the advancement of knowledge and its dissemination.

**Incentives of the scheme:**

- Institutes with IOE tag will be given greater autonomy and freedom to decide fees, course durations and governance structures.
- The public institutions under IOE tag will receive a government grant of ₹1,000 crore, while the private institutions will not get any funding under the scheme.
10. National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)
- The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was approved by the Ministry of Education in September 2015.
- It is the first-ever effort by the government to rank Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the country. Participation in NIRF was made compulsory for all government-run educational institutions in 2018.
- It ranks State-run higher education institutions (HEIs) together with centrally funded institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the Indian Institute of Science, the National Institutes of Technology, central universities, etc.
- In order to be ranked, all education institutions are assessed on five parameters: teaching, learning and resources, research and professional practices, graduation outcomes, outreach and inclusivity, and perception.

Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship

1. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0)
Third phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0) was launched in 600 districts across all states of India.
- Spearheaded by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), this phase will focus on new-age and COVID-related skills.

About PMKVY 3.0:
PMKVY 3.0 envisages training of eight lakh candidates over a scheme period of 2020-2021.
- Around 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs), empaneled non-PMKK training centres and more than 200 ITIs under Skill India will be rolling out PMKVY 3.0 training to build a robust pool of skilled professionals.
- On the basis of the learning gained from PMKVY 1.0 and PMKVY 2.0, the Ministry has improved the newer version of the scheme to match the current policy doctrine and energize the skilling ecosystem affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

About PMKVY:
Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), launched in 2015, is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) implemented by National Skill Development Corporation.
- The objective of this Skill Certification Scheme: is to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood.
- Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 2.0 (PMKVY 2.0) 2016-20
After the successful implementation of pilot PMKVY (2015-16), PMKVY 2016-20 was launched by scaling up both in terms of Sector and Geography and by greater alignment with other missions of Government of India like Make in India, Digital India, Swachh Bharat, etc.
Objectives of PMKVY 2016-20
Enable and mobilize a large number of youths to take up industry designed quality skill training, become employable and earn their livelihood.
- Encourage standardisation of the Certification process and put in place the foundation for creating a registry of skills.
- Benefit 10 million youth over the period of four years (2016-2020).
Skill India Mission
“Skill India Mission” has gained tremendous momentum through launch of its flagship scheme PMKVY to unlock the vision of making India the ‘Skill Capital’ of the world.

Ministry of Women and Child Development

1. PM Cares for Children Scheme
   - The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India had extended the PM Cares for Children Scheme till 28th February, 2022.
   - Launched in May 2021.
   - The scheme covers all children who have lost:
     - Both parents or
     - Surviving parent or
     - legal guardian/adoptive parents/single adoptive parent due to COVID 19 pandemic.
   - To be entitled to benefits under this scheme Child should not have completed 18 years of age on the date of death of parents.
   - The objective of the scheme is to ensure comprehensive care and protection of children who have lost their parent(s) to COVID pandemic, in a sustained manner, enable their wellbeing through health insurance, empower them through education and equip them for self-sufficient existence with financial support on reaching 23 years of age.
   - The PM CARES for children scheme inter-alia provides support to these children through convergent approach, gap funding for ensuring education, health, monthly stipend from the age of 18 years, and lump sum amount of Rs. 10 lakhs on attaining 23 years of age.

Features of the scheme:
   1. School Education: For children under 10 years: Admission will be given in the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya or in a private school as a day scholar.
   2. School Education: for children between 11-18 years: The child will be given admission in any Central Government residential school such as Sainik School, Navodaya Vidyalaya etc.
   3. Support for Higher Education: The child will be assisted in obtaining an education loan for Professional courses / Higher Education in India as per the existing Education Loan norms.
   4. Health Insurance: All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under Ayushman Bharat Scheme (PM-JAY) with a health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakhs.

2. Poshan Tracker
The Government of India has told in the Lok Sabha that the Data recorded in the Poshan (Nutrition) Tracker have not been made public in the interest of privacy of women and children.
   - The objective is to honour the privacy of women and children who are serviced by the Government of India in collaboration with State Governments across the anganwadi systems in the country.

About the Poshan Tracker:
   - The Poshan Tracker, known as the ICDS-CAS (Integrated Child Development Services-Common Application Software) in its earlier avatar, was set up with the aim of tracking and improving various services delivered at anganwadis and to ensure nutritional management of beneficiaries.
   - This real-time monitoring system is one of the key pillars of Poshan Abhiyan or Nutrition Mission approved by the Union Cabinet in November 2017 with a financial outlay of ₹9,000 crore for three years.
Significance:
The tracker is one of the important pillars of the Poshan Abhiyan and helps the Government monitor services delivered at 12.3 lakh anganwadi centres and record nutritional indicators of 9.8 lakh beneficiaries, including children in the age of six months to six years as well as pregnant women and lactating mothers.

- Anganwadis provide six services, which include supplementary nutrition in the form of hot-cooked meals and take home ration, immunisation and pre-school education.

About Poshan Abhiyan:
- The programme seeks to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- Launched in 2018 with specific targets to be achieved by 2022.

It aims to reduce:
- Stunting and wasting by 2% a year (total 6% until 2022) among children.
- Anaemia by 3% a year (total 9%) among children, adolescent girls and pregnant women and lactating mothers.

The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.

Background:
More than a third of the children under five face stunting and wasting and 40% aged between one and four are anaemic. Over 50% of pregnant and other women were found to be anaemic, said the National Family Health Survey 4 released in 2016.

POSHAN 2.0:
- It is an umbrella scheme covering the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme For Adolescent Girls, National Creche Scheme).
- It was announced in Union Budget 2021-22 by merging supplementary nutrition programmes and the Poshan Abhiyan.
- It was launched to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcome, with renewed focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition in the country.

3. One Stop Centre Scheme
The Central government will set up One Stop Centres (OSCs) across 10 missions to provide assistance to Indian women who are survivors of gender-based violence.
- The missions where the OSCs will come up are Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Jeddah and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Australia, Canada and Singapore.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development will also set up 300 OSCs in the country in addition to the nearly 700 existing ones across all districts. “The aim will be to cover districts with high rates of crimes against women.”

About the scheme:
Popularly known as Sakhi, Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has formulated this Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
It is a sub – scheme of Umbrella Scheme for National Mission for Empowerment of women. Target group: The OSC will support all women including girls below 18 years of age affected by violence, irrespective of caste, class, religion, region, sexual orientation or marital status.

The Centres will be integrated with a Women Helpline to facilitate access to following services:
1. Emergency response and rescue services.
2. Medical assistance.
3. Assistance to women in lodging the FIR.
4. Psycho-social support and counselling.
5. Legal aid and counselling.
6. Shelter.
7. Video conferencing facility.

Funds:
The Scheme will be funded through Nirbhaya Fund. The Central Government will provide 100% financial assistance to the State Government /UT Administrations under the Scheme.

Need for protection:
1. Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a global health, human rights and development issue that transcends geography, class, culture, age, race and religion to affect every community and country in every corner of the world.
2. The Article 1 of UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence 1993 provides a definition of gender – based abuse, calling it “any act of gender – based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.
3. In India, gender based violence has many manifestations; from the more universally prevalent forms of domestic and sexual violence including rape, to harmful practices such as, dowry, honour killings, acid attacks, witch – hunting, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, child marriage, sex selective abortion, sati etc.

4. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)
   It is a Maternity Benefit Programme that is implemented in all the districts of the country in accordance with the provision of the National Food Security Act, 2013.
   - Under PMMVY, pregnant women and lactating mothers (PW&LM) receive ₹5,000 on the birth of their first child in three instalments, after fulfilling certain conditionalities.
   - They receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 in three instalments on fulfilling the respective conditionality, viz. early registration of pregnancy, ante-natal check-up and registration of the birth of the child and completion of first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family.
   - It is combined with another scheme, Janani Suraksha Yojana, under which nearly ₹1,000 is given for an institutional birth, so that a woman gets a total of ₹6,000.
   - It excludes those PW&LM who are in regular employment with the Central Government or the State Governments or PSUs or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force.
   - The direct benefit cash transfer is to help expectant mothers meet enhanced nutritional requirements as well as to partially compensate them for wage loss during their pregnancy.
   - The scheme was announced on December 31, 2016.
   - Funding: The scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under which cost sharing ratio between the Centre and the States & UTs with Legislature is 60:40 while for North-Eastern States & three Himalayan States; it is 90:10. It is 100% Central assistance for Union Territories without Legislature.
Ministry of Science and Technology

1. **Power scheme for women scientists**
   
   **POWER**- Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research.
   
   - It is a scheme to mitigate gender disparity in science and engineering research funding in various S&T programs in Indian academic institutions and R&D laboratories.
   - Launched by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

   It will have two components namely: (1) SERB-POWER Fellowship; (2) SERB-POWER Research Grants.

2. **Biotech-KISAN Programme**
   
   1. It is a farmer-centric scheme for farmers, developed by and with farmers under the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology.
   2. It is a pan-India program, following a hub-and-spoke model and stimulates entrepreneurship and innovation in farmers and empowers women farmers.
   3. It identifies and promotes local farm leadership in both genders. Such leadership helps to develop science-based farming besides facilitating the transfer of knowledge.

Ministry of Rural Development

1. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme**

   The scheme was introduced in 2005 as a social measure that guarantees “the right to work”.
   
   - The key tenet of this social measure and labour law is that the local government will have to legally provide at least 100 days of wage employment in rural India to enhance their quality of life.

   **Key objectives:**
   
   1. Generation of paid rural employment of not less than 100 days for each worker who volunteers for unskilled labour.
   2. Proactively ensuring social inclusion by strengthening the livelihood base of rural poor.
   3. Creation of durable assets in rural areas such as wells, ponds, roads and canals.
   4. Reduce urban migration from rural areas.
   5. Create rural infrastructure by using untapped rural labour.
The following are the eligibility criteria for receiving the benefits under MGNREGA scheme:
1. Must be Citizen of India to seek MGNREGA benefits.
2. Job seeker has completed 18 years of age at the time of application.
3. The applicant must be part of a local household (i.e. application must be made with local Gram Panchayat).
4. Applicants must volunteer for unskilled labour.

Implementation of the scheme:
1. **Within 15 days of submitting the application** or from the day work is demanded, wage employment will be provided to the applicant.
2. **Right to get unemployment allowance** in case employment is not provided within fifteen days of submitting the application or from the date when work is sought.
3. **Social Audit** of MGNREGA works is mandatory, which lends to accountability and transparency.
4. The **Gram Sabha** is the principal forum for wage seekers to raise their voices and make demands.
5. It is the **Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat which approves** the shelf of works under MGNREGA and fix their priority.

2. **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana**
The government has said that under the schemes implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) at least 30 percent of the expenditure allocated for agricultural schemes is being incurred for women to bring them into mainstream agriculture. This mainly includes Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana.

About **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana**:
- It was started in 2011.
- The “Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana” (MKSP) is a sub component of the Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-NRLM (DAY-NRLM).
- It seeks to improve the present status of women in Agriculture, and to enhance the opportunities available to empower her.
- MKSP recognizes the identity of “Mahila” as “Kisan” and strives to build the capacity of women in the domain of agro-ecologically sustainable practices.
- Upto 60% (90% for North Eastern States) of the funding support for such projects is provided by the government.

The focus of MKSP is on:
Capacitating smallholders to adopt sustainable climate resilient agro-ecology and eventually create a pool of skilled community professionals.

Need for feminization of agriculture:
Most of the women-headed households are not able to access extension services, farmers support institutions and production assets like seed, water, credit, subsidy etc. As agricultural workers, women are paid lower wages than men.

3. **National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)**
- The NSAP is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Ministry of Rural Development. It came into effect from 15th August, 1995.
- It represents a significant step towards the fulfillment of the DPSP in Article 41 of the Constitution (It directs the State to provide public assistance to its citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in other cases of undeserved want within the limit of its economic capacity and development).
• It aims **to provide financial assistance to the elderly, widows and persons with disabilities in the form of social pensions.**

• **Coverage:** It currently covers more than three crore people who are below the poverty line (BPL), including about 80 lakh widows, 10 lakh disabled and 2.2 crore elderly.

Presently NSAP comprises of five schemes, namely:

1. Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS).
2. Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS).
3. Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS).
5. Annapurna.

### Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

**1. PM GatiShakti — National Master Plan**
Launched in 2020, it is a digital platform that connects 16 ministries — including Roads and Highways, Railways, Shipping, Petroleum and Gas, Power, Telecom, Shipping, and Aviation. It aims to ensure holistic planning and execution of infrastructure projects.

- It aims to boost multimodal connectivity and drive down logistics costs.
- PM Gati Shakti will cover the infrastructure projects worth over Rs 500 crore of various Ministries of the Union and State Governments like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, dry/land ports, UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagarik — subsidies for facilitating air travel), etc.
- Economic Zones like textile clusters, pharmaceutical clusters, defence corridors, electronic parks, industrial corridors, fishing clusters, agri zones will be covered to improve connectivity & make Indian businesses more competitive.
- It will also leverage technology extensively including spatial planning tools with ISRO imagery developed by BiSAG-N (Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics).

**Services provided:**
- The portal will offer 200 layers of geospatial data, including on existing infrastructure such as roads, highways, railways, and toll plazas, as well as geographic information about forests, rivers and district boundaries to aid in planning and obtaining clearances.
- The portal will also allow various government departments to track, in real time and at one centralised place, the progress of various projects, especially those with multi-sectoral and multi-regional impact.
Ministry of Textiles

1. **Pli scheme for textiles**
The Government had launched the *Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme* for the textiles sector worth Rs 10,683 crore.
- This is part of a larger PLI scheme for 13 sectors, with a total budgetary outlay of 1.97 lakh crore.

**Focus areas?**
The PLI scheme for textiles aims to promote the production of high value *Man-Made Fibre (MMF) fabrics, garments and technical textiles*.

**Eligibility:**
1. Any person or company willing to invest a minimum of Rs 300 crore in plant, machinery, equipment and civil works (excluding land and administrative building cost) to produce products of MMF fabrics, garments and products of technical textiles will be eligible to participate in the first part of the scheme.
2. Investors willing to spend a minimum of Rs 100 crore under the same conditions shall be eligible to apply in the second part of the scheme.

**Incentives:**
1. Under PLI, the Centre will subsidise eligible manufacturers by paying incentives on incremental production.
2. Companies investing over Rs 300 crore in plant, machinery, equipment and civil works to produce the identified products will get an incentive of 15 percent of their turnover, which needs to be Rs 600 crore in the third year.
3. The companies investing between Rs 100 crore and Rs 300 crore will also be eligible to receive duty refunds and incentives (lower than 15 percent of their turnover).
4. The government expects to achieve "fresh investment of over Rs 19,000 crore and a cumulative turnover of more than Rs 3 lakh crore".

2. **PM MITRA scheme**
The government has approved the setting up of seven PM MITRA *textiles parks*, following the “Union Budget for 2021-22” commitments.

**About “PM-MITRA” Scheme:**
The scheme aims to realize the vision of building an *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* by positioning India strongly on the Global textiles map.
It is inspired by the 5F vision of Hon’ble Prime Minister – Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign.

**Aim:**
- The scheme aims to create a world-class industrial infrastructure that would attract cutting-edge technology and boost FDI and local investment in the sector.

**Selection of sites:**
Sites for the scheme will be selected by a Challenge Method, based on objective criteria for Greenfield / Brownfield sites.

**Implementation:**
- PM MITRA park will be developed by a Special Purpose Vehicle which will be owned by the Central and State Government and in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode.
- Each MITRA Park will have an incubation centre, common processing house and a common effluent treatment plant and other textile related facilities such as design centres and testing centres.
- The Master Developer will not only develop the Industrial Park but also maintain it during the concession period.

**Funding:**
Under the scheme, the centre will provide development capital support for the development of common infrastructure of Rs 500 crore for each greenfield MITRA park and upto Rs 200 crore for each brownfield park.
- Greenfield describes a completely new project that has to be executed from scratch, while a brownfield project is one that has been worked on by others.

**Eligibility for Incentives:**
- An additional Rs 300 crore will be provided as Competitiveness Incentive Support for the early establishment of textiles manufacturing units in each of these parks.
- Investors who set up “anchor plants” that employ at least 100 people will be eligible for incentives of upto Rs 10 crore every year for upto three years.

**What are the advantages of the PM-MITRA Scheme?**
- The scheme intended to generate approximately 1 lakh direct and 2 lakh indirect employment per park.
- The Scheme will offer an opportunity to create an integrated textiles value chain right from spinning, weaving, processing/dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing at one location that would ease business and will reduce logistics costs of the Industry.
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

1. **SMILE Scheme**
   The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated this scheme for Support for Marginalized Individuals.

   **About the scheme:**
   - “SMILE stands for Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise”.
   - **Focus of the scheme** is on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counseling, basic documentation, education, skill development, economic linkages etc.
   - It includes sub scheme - ‘Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging’.
   - The scheme would be implemented with the support of State/UT Governments/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), institutions and others.

2. **Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana**
   The government has launched 'PM-DAKSH' portal and app to make the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Safai Karamcharis.

   **About the scheme:**
   1. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from the year 2020-21.
   2. Under the scheme, eligible target groups are being provided skill development training programmes on up-skilling/reskilling, short term training programme, long term training programme and entrepreneurship development program (EDP).
   3. **Eligibility:** Marginalized persons of SC, OBC, Economically Backward Classes, De-notified tribes, Sanitation workers including waste pickers, manual scavengers, transgenders and other similar categories.

3. **SAGE Portal**
   The Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, launched the SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine) initiative and SAGE portal to support India’s elderly persons.
   - The portal will be a “one-stop access” of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups.
   - The start-ups selected under SAGE will be those which will provide new innovative products and services to elderly persons in various areas like health, travel, finance, legal, housing, food among others.
   - The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment will act as a facilitator for this scheme.
   - A fund of uptoRs.1 crore as one-time equity will be granted to each selected start-up.

4. **Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Program**
   1. The program aims to create a pool of grass-root rehabilitation workers at community level who can work alongside ASHA and Anganwadi workers to handle cross disability issues and facilitate inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society.
   2. The program has been designed to provide competency based knowledge and skills among these workers to enhance their ability for successfully discharging their duties. These workers will be called 'Divyang Mitra' i.e. friends of persons with disabilities.
   3. The National Board of Examination in Rehabilitation under the Rehabilitation Council of India will conduct examinations and award certificates to pass-out candidates.
Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MOFPI)

1. ‘One District One Product’ scheme

The Food Processing Ministry had inked an agreement with NAFED for developing 10 brands as the One District One Product brands under the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme. All the products will be available at NAFED Bazaars, E-commerce platforms, and prominent retail stores across India.

About the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme:

Launched in 2020, the scheme will be implemented for five years until 2024-25. It is for the Unorganized Sector on All India basis.

Objectives:
1. Increase in access to finance by micro food processing units.
2. Increase in revenues of target enterprises.
3. Enhanced compliance with food quality and safety standards.
4. Strengthening capacities of support systems.
5. Transition from the unorganized sector to the formal sector.
6. Special focus on women entrepreneurs and Aspirational districts.
7. Encourage Waste to Wealth activities.
8. Focus on minor forest produce in Tribal Districts.

Salient features:
1. Centrally Sponsored Expenditure to be shared by Government of India and States at 60:40.
2. 2,00,000 micro-enterprises are to be assisted with credit linked subsidy. Micro enterprises will get credit linked subsidy at 35 per cent of the eligible project cost with ceiling of Rs. 10 lakh.
3. Beneficiary contribution will be minimum 10 per cent and balance from loan. Seed capital will be given to SHGs (Rs. four lakh per SHG) for loan to members for working capital and small tools.
5. Focus on perishables.

Administrative and Implementation Mechanisms:
● The Scheme would be monitored at Centre by an Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee (IMEC) under the Chairmanship of Minister, FPI.
● A State/ UT Level Committee (SLC) chaired by the Chief Secretary will monitor and sanction/ recommend proposals for expansion of micro units and setting up of new units by the SHGs/ FPOs/ Cooperatives.
● The States/ UTs will prepare Annual Action Plans covering various activities for implementation of the scheme, which will be approved by Government of India.
● A third party evaluation and mid-term review mechanism would be built in the programme.
● National level portal would be set-up wherein the applicants/ individual enterprise could apply to participate in the Scheme. All the scheme activities would be undertaken on the National portal.

Benefits of the scheme:
● Nearly eight lakh micro-enterprises will benefit through access to information, better exposure and formalization.
● It will enable them to formalize, grow and become competitive.
● The project is likely to generate nine lakh skilled and semi-skilled jobs.
• Scheme envisages increased access to credit by existing micro food processing entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs in the Aspirational Districts.  
• Better integration with organized markets.  
• Increased access to common services like sorting, grading, processing, packaging, storage etc.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

1. **Push for semiconductor manufacturing**

   Government approved a ₹76,000 crore scheme to boost semiconductor and display manufacturing in the country, taking the total amount of incentives announced for the electronics sector to ₹2.30 lakh crore.

   **Details:**
   
   • **Aim:** “Development of sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem in the country” is aimed at making India a **global hub of electronic system design and manufacturing**.
   
   • **Finance:** The scheme would provide **fiscal support of up to 50% of the project cost** for setting up semiconductor and display fabrication units.
   
   • **Collaboration:** Centre would work with the States to set up **high-tech clusters** with the necessary infrastructure such as land and semiconductor-grade water.
   
   • **India Semiconductor Mission:** A specialised and independent ‘India Semiconductor Mission’ will be set up. It will act as the **nodal agency for efficient and smooth implementation** of the schemes on semiconductors and display ecosystem.
   
   • **“Chips to start-ups” programme:** It would develop 85,000 well-trained engineers. Semiconductor designers would be given the opportunity to launch start-ups. The government would bear **50% of the expense** under the design-linked incentive scheme.

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

1. **MPLAD Scheme**

   Citing economic recovery, the Union Cabinet has restored the **Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)** that was suspended in April 2020 subsuming the funds for the scheme in the consolidated fund of India. However, the MPs will get ₹2 crore instead of the annual approved ₹5 crore.

   **Background:**
   
   The government had in **April, 2020 decided not to operate MPLADS for the Financial Years 2020-21 and 2021-22**; and place the MPLADS funds for these two-years at the disposal of the Ministry of Finance to meet the emergent needs of people.

   • From ₹5,012 crore spent during 2018-19, an expenditure of just ₹2,491.45 crore was taken up under the scheme in 2019-20.

   **How was this fund utilised?**
   
   The government has said that the funds saved from the MPLAD Scheme have been utilised to enhance the allocation of funds for improving health infrastructure, provide free ration under **PM Garib Kalyan Yojana**, and free vaccination for the people.

   **About MPLAD scheme:**
   
   • Launched in December, 1993.
● Seeks to provide a mechanism for the Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature for creation of durable community assets and for provision of basic facilities including community infrastructure, based on locally felt needs.
● The MPLADS is a Plan Scheme fully funded by Government of India.
● MPs only recommend projects, but the final choice and implementation rests with the district authorities.

**Special focus:**
● MPs are to recommend every year, works costing at least 15 per cent of the MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by Scheduled Caste population and 7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by S.T. population.

**Release of Funds:**
● Funds are released in the form of grants in-aid directly to the district authorities.
● The funds released under the scheme are non-lapsable.
● The liability of funds not released in a particular year is carried forward to the subsequent years, subject to eligibility.
● The MPs have a recommendatory role under the scheme.
● The district authority is empowered to examine the eligibility of works, sanction funds and select the implementing agencies, prioritise works, supervise overall execution, and monitor the scheme at the ground level.
● At least 10% of the projects under implementation in the district are to be inspected every year by the district authority.

**Recommendation of works:**
● The Lok Sabha Members can recommend works in their respective constituencies.
● The elected members of the Rajya Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the state from which they are elected.
● Nominated members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha may select works for implementation anywhere in the country.

**How does the scheme work?**
● The government transfers it directly to the respective local authorities. The legislators can only recommend works in their constituencies based on a set of guidelines.
● For the MPLAD Scheme, the guidelines focus on the creation of durable community assets like roads, school buildings etc.
● Recommendations for non-durable assets can be made only under limited circumstances. For example, recently the government allowed use of MPLAD funds for the purchase of personal protection equipment, coronavirus testing kits etc.
● The guidelines for use of MLALAD funds differ across states. For example, Delhi MLAs can recommend the operation of fogging machines (to contain dengue mosquitoes), installation of CCTV cameras etc.
● After the legislators give the list of developmental works, they are executed by the district authorities as per the governments financial, technical and administrative rules.
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

1. **Lakshya Zero Dumpsite**
   - The housing and urban affairs ministry will provide assistance under “Lakshya Zero Dumpsite”.
   - So far over 260 cities across five states and UTs have submitted their action plan for legacy waste remediation as a part of the vision of garbage-free cities.
   - The remediation of legacy waste will take the country closer to the Swachh Bharat mission’s dream of being garbage-free, further the vision of resource recovery and principles of the circular economy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the plan to make Indian cities garbage free under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 and one of the major objectives under the mission is ‘Lakshya Zero’ Dumpsite.

**Significance of the project:**
- Legacy dumpsites pose major threats to the environment and contribute to air pollution and water pollution. Clearing these mountains of years-old waste is critical to not just transforming the urban landscape of the country, but also addressing the issue of public health and environmental concerns.

2. **Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR) Program**

Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR), which is a joint initiative of MoHUA, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and leading Indian academic institutions of the country.

   - The initiative has been launched as a part of the Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav (AKAM) celebrations across the country.
   - Under the program, 15 premier architecture & planning institutes of the country will be working with Smart Cities to document landmark projects undertaken by the Smart Cities Mission.
   - The documents will capture the learnings from best practices, provide opportunities for engagement on urban development projects to students, and enable real-time information flow between urban practitioners and academia.

3. **Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH)**

Centre's Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) has completed its first residential project.

   - The residential project -- Rivali Park in suburban Mumbai -- is the first housing project in India to have received funding under the SWAMIH Fund.

About SWAMIH Fund:

   - The SWAMIH Fund was launched in November 2019.
   - SWAMIH Investment Fund has been formed to complete construction of stalled, RERA-registered affordable and mid-income category housing projects which are stuck due to paucity of funds.
   - The fund was set up as a Category-II AIF (Alternate Investment Fund) debt fund registered with SEBI.
   - The Investment Manager of the Fund is SBICAP Ventures, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SBI Capital Markets, which in turn is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the State Bank of India.
   - The Sponsor of the Fund is the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.
Who will be the investors of the fund?
AIFs created/funded under the Special Window would solicit investment into the fund from the Government and other private investors including cash-rich financial institutions, sovereign wealth funds, public and private banks, domestic pension and provident funds, global pension funds and other institutional investors.

Ministry of Defence

1. **Services e-Health Assistance and Teleconsultation (SeHAT)**
   It is the tri-services teleconsultation service of the Ministry of Defence designed for all entitled personnel and their families.
   - SeHAT stay home OPD is a patient-to-doctor system where the patient can consult a doctor remotely through the internet using his Smartphone, laptop, Desktop or Tablet.

2. **SPARSH: System for Pension Administration (Raksha)**
   - The Ministry of Defense has signed an agreement with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited (under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) to expand the coverage of pension services under SPARSH or System for Pension Administration (Raksha) across four lakh Common Service Centers.
   - This will provide last mile connectivity to pensioners, especially those who live in remote areas of the country and those who do not have access or technical knowledge and skill to use SPARSH.

SPARSH is an initiative of the Ministry of Defense.
- It aims to provide comprehensive services to defense pensioners.
- It promotes the Government’s vision of ‘Digital India’, ‘Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)’ and ‘Minimum Government, Maximum Governance’.

3. **Negative imports list for defence**
The Government has brought in few changes in its negative imports list policy. This includes:
- The armed forces will now be able to import defence equipment in certain circumstances even if it figures in the negative import list.
- This includes scenarios where there is an “immediate requirement” that domestic industry cannot cater to, or if the safety of soldiers is at stake due to inadequacies in an indigenous product.
- There is also a provision now to review or remove items mentioned in the negative import list, which was first formulated in August 2020.

What is the negative imports list policy/positive indigenisation list?
Introduced in August 2020, the negative list essentially means that the Armed Forces—Army, Navy and Air Force—will only procure such items from domestic manufacturers.
- The manufacturers could be private sector players or Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).

Why was this policy needed? What will be the impact?
As per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, India has been the second largest importer between 2014 and 2019 with US$ 16.75 billion worth of imports during this period.

- **The government wants to reduce the dependence on imported items in defence** and give a shot in the arm to the domestic defence manufacturing industry.
- By denying the possibility of importing the items on the negative list, the domestic industry is given the opportunity to step up and manufacture them for the needs of the forces.

2nd list:
The Defence Ministry notified the second negative import list, in May 2021, of 108 items that can now be only purchased from indigenous sources. **The new list takes the total number on the list to 209.**

- The list comprises complex systems, sensors, simulator, weapons and ammunitions like helicopters, next generation corvettes, Air Borne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) systems, tank engines.

**Significance and implications of this move:**

1. Recognises the potential of local defence industry.
2. Invigorate impetus to domestic Research and Development by attracting fresh investment into technology and manufacturing capabilities.
3. Provides an excellent opportunity for ‘start-ups’ as also Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

4. **Corporatization of ordnance factory board**
The Union Cabinet has approved a plan to corporatize the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).

**Ordnance Factory Board (OFB):**
It is an umbrella body for the ordnance factories and related institutions, and is currently a subordinate office of the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
The first Indian ordnance factory was set up in the year 1712 by the Dutch Company as a GunPowder Factory, West Bengal.

- OFBs will be responsible for different verticals of the products such as the Ammunition and Explosives group will be engaged in production of ammunition while a Vehicles group will engage in production of defence mobility and combat vehicles.

**What Will Change?**
According to the plan, the 41 companies will reportedly be grouped under the new entities that will function like any other existing defence public sector undertaking (DPSU) like Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) or Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

**Significance of new structure:**

1. The restructuring is aimed at transforming the ordnance factories into productive and profitable assets, deepen their specialisation in product range, enhance competitiveness and improve quality and cost-efficiency.
2. The restructure would help in overcoming various shortcomings in the existing system of the OFB by eliminating inefficient supply chains and provide these companies incentive to become competitive and explore new opportunities in the market.
3. It will allow these companies autonomy as well as help improve accountability and efficiency.
Ministry of Commerce & Industry

1. National Export Insurance Account (NEIA)
   - National Export Insurance Account (NEIA) is a trust set up by the Ministry of Commerce and administered by Export Credit & Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC).
   - NEIA Trust was established in 2006 to promote project exports from India that are of strategic and national importance.
   - NEIA provides additional support to the insurance cover provided by ECGC for project exports making Indian project exporters more competitive and gain a stronger foothold in various jurisdictions, highlighting India’s capabilities to execute large projects abroad.

   Objectives:
   The National Export Insurance Account (NEIA) Trust aims to ensure the availability of credit risk cover for projects and other high-value exports, which are desirable from the point of view of national interest, but which ECGC is unable to underwrite due to capacity constraints or at terms, which are different from its regular policies.

   What does it do?
   - The NEIA Trust promotes Medium and Long Term (MLT) /project exports by extending (partial/full) support to covers issued by ECGC to MLT/project export.
   - It also supports to Exim Bank for Buyer’s Credit (BC-NEIA) tied to project exports from India.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs

1. Van Dhan Vikas Kendras initiative
   Manipur has emerged as the Champion state where the Van Dhan programme has emerged as a major source of employment for the local tribals.
   - The initiative aims to promote Minor Forest Products (MFPs)-centric livelihood development of tribal gatherers and artisans.
   - It mainstreams the tribal community by promoting primary level value addition to MFP at grassroots level.

   Implementation:
   - Implemented through Ministry of Tribal Affairs as Nodal Department at the Central Level and TRIFED as Nodal Agency at the National Level.
   - At State level, the State Nodal Agency for MFPs and the District collectors are envisaged to implement at grassroot level.
- **Locally** the Kendras are proposed to be managed by a **Managing Committee (an SHG) consisting of representatives of Van Dhan SHGs in the cluster.**
- **Composition:** As per the plan, TRIFED will facilitate establishment of MFP-led multi-purpose Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, a cluster of 10 SHGs comprising of 30 tribal MFP gatherers each, in the tribal areas.
- The North-East is leading the way with 80% of the established VDKs. Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh are other states where the scheme has been adopted with overwhelming results.

TRIFED:
It is the national level cooperative body mandated to bring about socio-economic development of tribals of the country by institutionalising the trade of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) & Surplus Agricultural Produce (SAP) collected/cultivated by them.
- It was established in 1987.
- It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

**Important Functions:**
- It plays the dual role of both a market developer and a service provider, empowering the tribals with knowledge and tools to better their operations in a systematic, scientific manner and also assist them in developing their marketing approach.
- It is involved actively in capacity building of the tribal people through sensitization and the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- The organisation also assists them in exploring and creating opportunities to market the developed products in national and international markets on a sustainable basis.

2. **Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP’ Scheme**
   The government has included 14 new minor forest produce items under the mechanism for marketing of minor forest produce through a minimum support price scheme.
   - Newly included items are Tasar Cocoon, elephant apple dry, bamboo shoot, malkangani seed and wild dry mushroom among others.

   **About the Scheme:**
   The Central government had introduced a minimum support price for a selected list of minor produce items through mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce through Minimum Support price and development of Value Chain of MFP Scheme in 2011.
   - It aims to provide a social safety net to these underprivileged forest dwellers, and to aid in their empowerment.

   **Implementation:**
   1. The responsibility of purchasing MFP on MSP will be with State designated agencies.
   2. To ascertain market price, services of market correspondents would be availed by the designated agencies particularly for major markets trading in MFP.
3. The scheme supports primary value addition as well as provides for supply chain infrastructure like cold storage, warehouses etc.
4. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs will be the nodal Ministry for implementation and monitoring of the scheme. The Minimum Support Price would be determined by the Ministry with technical help of TRIFED.

What is MFP?
- **Section 2(i) of the Forest Rights Act** defines a Minor Forest Produce (MFP) as all non-timber forest produce of plant origin and includes bamboo, brushwood, stumps, canes, cocoon, honey, waxes, Lac, tendu/kendu leaves, medicinal plants etc.

**Ministry of Communications**

1. **BharatNet project**
   1. BharatNet Project was originally launched in 2011 as the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) and renamed as Bharat-Net in 2015.
   2. It seeks to provide connectivity to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) through optical fibre.
   3. It is a flagship mission implemented by Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. (BBNL).
   4. The objective is to facilitate the delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, Internet and other services to rural India.

   **The larger vision of the project is:**
   - To establish a highly scalable network infrastructure accessible on a non-discriminatory basis.
   - To provide on demand, affordable broadband connectivity of 2 Mbps to 20 Mbps for all households and on demand capacity to all institutions.
   - To realise the vision of Digital India, in partnership with States and the private sector.

   **Implementation:**
   The project is a Centre-State collaborative project, with the States contributing free Rights of Way for establishing the Optical Fibre Network.
   The entire project is being funded by Universal service Obligation Fund (USOF), which was set up for improving telecom services in rural and remote areas of the country.

**Ministry of Labour & Employment**

1. **4 labour codes**
   The implementation of four labour codes (on wages, social security, occupational safety and industrial relations) is delayed.

   **About the labour codes:**
   The new set of regulations consolidates 44 labour laws under 4 categories of Codes namely, Wage Code; Social Security Code; Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions Code; and the Industrial Relations Code.
   - The Parliament has already passed all the four Codes and it has also received the President’s assent.
The 4 codes are:

1. **The Code on Wages, 2019**, applying to all the employees in organized as well as unorganized sector, aims to regulate wage and bonus payments in all employments and aims at providing equal remuneration to employees performing work of a similar nature in every industry, trade, business, or manufacture.

2. **The Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, 2020** seeks to regulate the health and safety conditions of workers in establishments with 10 or more workers, and in all mines and docks.


**2. Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana**

Employee’s State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) decided that in cases where the employer has shown "Zero" contribution in respect of an employee for some months before exiting him from the system, the relief under ABVKY for such period of "Zero" contribution, shall also be allowed.

**What’s the issue?**

- It was brought to the notice of ESIC that in some cases employers have struck off their employees from the rolls few months after actually terminating them from service.
- During this period, ESI contribution was also not filed by the employers for these employees in the system.
- As the relief under Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana is available only in case of unemployment of the Insured Persons, such employees though terminated from service became ineligible for relief under this scheme.

**About the scheme:**

- It is a welfare measure being implemented by the Employee’s State Insurance (ESI) Corporation.
- It offers cash compensation to insured persons when they are rendered unemployed.
- The Scheme was introduced w.e.f. 01-07-2018 on pilot basis for a period of two years initially. The Scheme has now been extended for another one year i.e. from 1st July, 2020 to 30th June, 2021.

In 2020, eligibility criteria for availing the relief were relaxed, as under:

1. The payment of relief has been enhanced to 50% of average of wages from earlier 25% of average wages payable upto maximum 90 days of unemployment.
2. Instead of the relief becoming payable 90 days after unemployment, it shall become due for payment after 30 days.
3. The Insured Person can submit the claim directly to ESIC Branch Office instead of the claim being forwarded by the last employer and the payment shall be made directly in the bank account of IP.
4. The Insured Person should have been insurable employment for a minimum period of 2 years before his/her unemployment and should have contributed for not less than 78 days in the contribution period immediately preceding to unemployment and minimum 78 days in one of the remaining 3 contribution periods in 02 years prior to unemployment.
Ministry of Tourism

1. Swadesh Darshan Scheme
As per the request received from the State Government of Bihar, Ministry of Tourism has included Punaura Dham in the Ramayana circuit of Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

- The destination of Punaura Dham has been recently included under PRASHAD Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism.
- Punaura Dham, considered to be birthplace of Goddess Sita, is spread over around 10 acres of land in Punaura village, about 5km west of Sitamarhi town.
- The shrine compound has a Ram Janki temple, a pond called Sita Kund and a hall.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme:
- Swadesh Darshan Scheme is a Central Sector scheme launched in 2014-15 by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India for the integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits.
- The scheme aims to promote, develop and harness the potential of tourism in India.
- Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, the Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance – CFA to State Governments, Union Territory Administrations for the infrastructure development of circuits.
- This scheme is envisioned to synergise with other schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India etc. with the idea of positioning the tourism sector as a major engine for job creation, the driving force for economic growth, building synergy with various sectors to enable tourism to realise its potential.

PRASHAD Scheme:
- The Government of India launched the PRASAD scheme in the year 2014-2015 under the Ministry of Tourism.
- The full form of the PRASAD scheme is ‘Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual Augmentation Drive’.
- This scheme focuses on developing and identifying pilgrimage sites across India for enriching the religious tourism experience.
- It aims to integrate pilgrimage destinations in a prioritised, planned and sustainable manner to provide a complete religious tourism experience.
- The PRASAD scheme aims at paving the way for the development and promotion of religious tourism in India.
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

1. I&B Ministry’s powers to regulate content on TV, other platforms

In which sectors can the I&B Ministry regulate content?

Till 2021: TV channels, newspapers and magazines, movies in theatres and on TV, and the radio — barring the internet.

Post the implementation of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021: Regulatory powers extended over internet content too, especially on digital news platforms and OTT platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime or Hotstar.

How does the ministry exercise its powers?

- **Through Cable TV network rules:** The Information and Broadcasting Ministry, in 2021, amended the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 regulating Cable TV networks, providing for a “statutory” mechanism for complaints raised by citizens regarding any content broadcast.

- **The Electronic Media Monitoring Cell:** It tracks channels for any violations of the programming and advertising codes mentioned in the Cable TV Network Rules, 1994. Violation can lead to revocation of a channel’s uplinking licence (for sending content to a satellite) or downlinking licence.

**Overview of Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2021:**

1. It provides for a three-level grievance redressal mechanism — self-regulation by broadcasters, self-regulation by the self-regulating bodies of the broadcasters, and oversight by an Inter-Departmental Committee at the level of the Union government.

**Procedure for grievance redressal:**

1. A viewer can file a complaint directly to the broadcaster, who will have to respond within 15 days.

2. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, the complaint can be escalated to the self-regulating bodies set up by TV channels, which should deal with the case in 60 days.

3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the self-regulating body, he may, within 15 days of such decision, prefer an appeal to the Central Government for its consideration under the Oversight Mechanism.

4. Such appeals will be dealt with by the Inter-Departmental Committee set up under the Oversight Mechanism.

**Composition of the committee:**

The committee will be headed by the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and have members from various ministries.

**Powers of the committee:**

1. Recommend the Centre to advise, issue a warning, censure, admonish or reprimand a broadcaster, or seek an apology.

2. Ask the broadcaster to include a warning card or a disclaimer, or to delete or modify content, or take the channel or a programme off-air for a specified time period, where it is satisfied that such action is warranted.

**Present Grievance redressal mechanism:**

At present, there is an institutional mechanism by way of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to address the grievances of citizens relating to the violation of the Programme/Advertising Codes under the Rules, but it does not have statutory backing.

**Significance of the new rules:**

www.insightsonindia.com
1. It paves the way “for a strong institutional system for redressing grievances.
2. It places accountability and responsibility on the broadcasters and their self-regulating bodies.

About the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995:
1. The law prescribes imprisonment up to two years or fine up to ₹1,000 or both for the first offence, and imprisonment up to five years and with fine up to ₹5,000 if any media governed under the CTN Act violates the provisions and the “Programme Code”.
2. The code, which contains an elaborate list of don’ts for cable TV channels, states that no programme should be aired that contains anything obscene, defamatory, false, and suggests innuendos and half-truths.

What kind of content is not allowed?
There are no specific laws on content allowed or prohibited in print and electronic media, radio, films or OTT platforms.
- The content on any of these platforms has to follow the free speech rules of the country.
- Article 19(1) of the Constitution, while protecting the freedom of speech, also lists certain “reasonable restrictions” including content related to the security of the state, friendly relationship with foreign states, public order, decency and morality etc.

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)

1. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evem Utthan Mahabhiyan / (PM KUSUM) Scheme
The Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- It is a scheme for farmers for installation of solar pumps and grid connected solar and other renewable power plants in the country.
- Approved in February 2019, the objective of the scheme is to provide financial and water security.
- The scheme aims to add solar and other renewable capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022.

Key features:
- As per provisions of the PM-KUSUM Scheme, the grid connected agriculture pumps can be solarised with central and state subsidy of 30% each and farmer’s contribution of 40%.
- It will also include feeder level solarisation.

Scheme implementation:
State Nodal Agencies (SNAs) of MNRE will coordinate with States/UTs, Discoms and farmers for implementation of the scheme.

Scheme benefits:
- The scheme will open a stable and continuous source of income to the rural landowners for a period of 25 years by utilisation of their dry/uncultivable land.
- In case cultivated fields are chosen for setting up solar power projects, the farmers could continue to grow crops as the solar panels are to be set up above a minimum height.
- The solar pumps will save the expenditure incurred on diesel for running diesel pumps and provide the farmers a reliable source of irrigation through solar pumps apart from preventing harmful pollution from running diesel pumps.
Ministry of Law and Justice

1. Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)
The Cabinet has approved the continuation of 1,023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) for another two years. The Centre’s share of will come from the Nirbhaya Fund.

About the scheme:
- Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) are being setup as a part of the National Mission for Safety of Women (NMSW).
- The scheme was started in October 2019.
- Implemented by the Department of Justice of the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- It is a Centrally sponsored scheme for expeditious trial and disposal of pending cases of rape and offences against children under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012.

Features of the FTSCs scheme:
1. The decision on extension of the scheme beyond one year will depend on the recommendations in the external evaluation.
2. The scheme does not intend to create any permanent infrastructure. The courts will be made functional in suitable premises taken on lease or as decided by the States/UTs and respective High Courts.
3. Composition: Each FTSC will have one Judicial Officer and seven staff members. States/UTs may engage judicial officers and court staff on contractual basis where sufficient manpower is not available. Services of retired judicial officers with relevant experience may also be engaged to dispose of cases in the FTSCs.

Ministry of Commerce & Industry

1. Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)
The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry chaired a meeting for the review of the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) initiative of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

What is ONDC?
Open Network for Digital Commerce christened ONDC is a globally first-of-its-kind initiative that aims to democratising Digital Commerce, moving it from a platform-centric model to an open-network.
- As UPI is to the digital payment domain, ONDC is to e-commerce in India.
- ONDC will enable, buyers and sellers to be digitally visible and transact through an open network, no matter what platform/application they use.
ONDC will empower merchants and consumers by breaking silos to form a single network to drive innovation and scale, transforming all businesses from retail goods, food to mobility.

**Aims and objectives:**
1. ONDC aims at **promoting open networks developed on open-sourced methodology**, using open specifications and open network protocols independent of any specific platform.
2. ONDC is **expected to digitize the entire value chain**, standardize operations, promote inclusion of suppliers, derive efficiencies in logistics and enhance value for consumers.

**2. Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS)**

The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) has been launched.

**About the Startup seed fund:**
- The Fund aims to provide financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry, and commercialization.
- Rs. 945 Crore corpus will be divided over the next 4 years for providing seed funding to eligible startups through eligible incubators across India.
- The scheme is expected to support an estimated 3,600 startups through 300 incubators.
- Nodal Department: Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.

**Significance:**
- The **SISFS will Secure seed funding, Inspire innovation, Support transformative ideas, Facilitate implementation, and Start startup revolution**.
- The Scheme will create a robust startup ecosystem, particularly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns of India, which are often deprived of adequate funding.

**Need for the scheme:**
- Easy availability of capital is essential for entrepreneurs at the early stages of growth of an enterprise.
- Funding from angel investors and venture capital firms becomes available to startups only after the proof of concept has been provided. Similarly, banks provide loans only to asset-backed applicants.
- It is essential to provide seed funding to startups with an innovative idea to conduct proof of concept trials.

**3. e-SANTA**
- It is an electronic marketplace providing a platform to connect aqua farmers and the buyers.
- Launched by Union Commerce Ministry.
- It will enable the farmers to get a better price and the exporters to directly purchase quality products from the farmers enhancing traceability, a key factor in international trade.
- The term e-SANTA was coined for the web portal, meaning Electronic Solution for Augmenting NaCSA farmers’ Trade in Aquaculture.
- e-SANTA will ‘RAISE’ the lives & income of farmers by: Reducing Risk, Awareness of Products & Markets, Increase in Income, Shielding Against Wrong Practice and Ease of Processes.
Ministry of Steel

1. **PLI Scheme for Specialty Steel**
Union Cabinet approves Production-linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Specialty Steel.

**Highlights of the scheme:**
- The duration of the scheme is from 2023-24 to 2027-28 (five years).
- It aims to boost the production of high-grade specialty steel in the country.
- There are 3 slabs of PLI incentives under the scheme. The lowest being 4% and the highest is 12%, which has been provided for electrical steel (CRGO).

**Coverage:**
The five categories of specialty steel that have been chosen in the PLI Scheme are: Coated/Plated Steel Products, High Strength/Wear-resistant Steel, Specialty Rails, Alloy Steel Products, and Steel wires, and Electrical Steel.

**What is Specialty Steel?**
Specialty steel is value-added steel wherein normal finished steel is worked upon by way of coating, plating, heat treatment, etc. to convert it into high-value-added steel.
- This steel can be used in various strategic applications like Defense, Space, Power, apart from the automobile sector, specialized capital goods among others.

By becoming Atma Nirbhar in producing speciality steel, India will move up the steel value chain and come at par with advanced steel-making countries like Korea and Japan.

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

1. **Ujjwala 2.0 scheme**
The government has launched the second phase of the Ujjwala gas connection scheme for the poor.

**Under Ujjwala 2.0:**
- Migrant workers would no longer have to struggle to get address proof documents to get the gas connections. These workers would only be required to submit a self-declaration of their residential address to get the gas connection. (migrants will not be required to submit ration cards or address proof).

**About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana:**
Launched in May 2016.
**Aim:** To provide LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections to poor households.
**Key features:** A deposit-free LPG connection is given to the eligible household with financial assistance of Rs 1,600 per connection by the Centre.

**Objectives of the scheme are:**
1. Empowering women and protecting their health.
2. Reducing the serious health hazards associated with cooking based on fossil fuel.
3. Reducing the number of deaths in India due to unclean cooking fuel.
4. Preventing young children from a significant number of acute respiratory illnesses caused due to indoor air pollution by burning fossil fuel.
Eligibility criteria:
1. Applicants must be a woman above the age of 18 and a citizen of India.
2. Applicants should belong to a BPL (Below Poverty Line) household.
3. No one in the applicant’s household should own an LPG connection.
4. The household income of the family, per month, must not exceed a certain limit as defined by the government of the Union Territories and State Government.
5. Applicants must not be a recipient of other similar schemes provided by the government.

During Ujjwala 1.0 launched in 2016, a target was set to provide LPG connections to 5 crore women members of BPL households. Subsequently, the scheme was expanded in April 2018 to include women beneficiaries from seven more categories (SC/ST, PMAY, AAY, Most backward classes, tea garden, forest dwellers, Islands). Also, the target was revised to 8 Crore LPG connections. This target was achieved in August 2019, seven months ahead of the target date.

Minister of Corporate Affairs

1. **MCA21 Version 3.0**
   Minister of Corporate Affairs has launched the first phase of Ministry of Corporate Affairs’ (MCA) MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0).

   What is MCA 21?
   MCA21 is an e-Governance initiative of Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) that enables easy and secure access of the MCA services to the corporate entities, professionals and citizens of India. It is the first Mission Mode e-Governance project of GoI.

MCA21 3.0:
- MCA21 V3 is a technology-driven forward-looking project, envisioned to strengthen enforcement, promote Ease of Doing Business, enhance the user experience, and facilitate seamless integration and data exchange among Regulators.
- The project will have Micro-services architecture with high scalability and capabilities for advanced analytics.
- It will have additional modules for e-Adjudication, e-Consultation and Compliance Management.

2. **Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT)**
   - Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) is an initiative aimed at setting up of Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants and make it available in the market for use in automotive fuels by inviting Expression of Interest from potential entrepreneurs.
   - The initiative was launched in October 2018 by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas in association with Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) Oil Marketing Companies (OMC) viz. Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd.
   - Government of India, under the SATAT initiatives envisages setting up of 5000 CBG plants by 2023-24 with production target of 15 MMT.
Ministry of Minority Affairs

1. **Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)**
The Ministry of Minority Affairs is implementing the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), in the identified Minority Concentration Areas (MCAs) of the country.

**About the PMJVK:**
The erstwhile Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) has been restructured and renamed as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram for effective implementation since 2018.
- It seeks to provide better socio-economic infrastructure facilities to the minority communities.

**Special focus by earmarking funds:**
1. 80% of the resources under the PMJVK would be earmarked for projects related to education, health and skill development.
2. 33 to 40% of resources under the PMJVK would be specifically allocated for women centric projects.

**Beneficiaries of PMJVK:**
- As far as PMJVK is concerned, the communities notified as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 would be taken as Minority Communities.
- At present 6 (six) communities namely Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified as Minority Communities.

Ministry of Power

1. **Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme for better operations & financial sustainability of all DISCOMs**

**Highlights of the scheme:**
1. It is a reforms-based and results-linked scheme.
2. It seeks to improve the operational efficiencies and financial sustainability of all DISCOMs/Power Departments excluding Private Sector DISCOMs.
3. The scheme envisages the provision of conditional financial assistance to DISCOMs for strengthening supply infrastructure.
4. The assistance will be based on meeting pre-qualifying criteria as well as upon the achievement of basic minimum benchmarks by the DISCOM.
5. The scheme involves a compulsory smart metering ecosystem across the distribution sector—starting from electricity feeders to the consumer level, including in about 250 million households.
6. Scheme also focuses on funding for feeder segregation for unsegregated feeders.
7. The Scheme has a major focus on improving electricity supply for the farmers and for providing daytime electricity to them through solarization of agricultural feeders.

**Implementation:**
- Existing power sector reforms schemes such as Integrated Power Development Scheme, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana will be merged into this umbrella program.
- Each state would have its own action plan for implementation of the scheme rather than a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.
Nodal agencies for the scheme’s implementation are **Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) Limited** and **Power Finance Corporation (PFC)**.

**Objectives of the scheme:**
1. Reduction of average aggregate technical and commercial loss to pan-India levels of 12-15% by 2024-25.
2. Narrow the deficit between the cost of electricity and the price at which it is supplied to zero by 2024-25.
3. Developing institutional capabilities for modern DISCOMs.
4. Improvement in the quality, reliability, and affordability of power supply to consumers through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector.

**2. Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS)**
A 50 kWp Solar roof top was recently inaugurated in Solan, Himachal Pradesh under the **Integrated power development scheme** of the **Ministry of Power**, Government of India.

- The project further reinforces the **‘Go Green’ Initiative** of the government envisaged in the **Urban Distribution scheme** of the government of India.

**About IPDS:**
**Power Finance Corporation (PFC)** is the Nodal agency for implementation of the scheme.

Launched in 2014 by **Ministry of Power** with the objectives of:
1. Strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution network in the urban areas.
2. Metering of distribution transformers /feeders / consumers in the urban areas.
3. IT enablement of distribution sector and strengthening of distribution network under R-APDRP.

**Significance of the scheme:**
The scheme will help in reduction in AT&C losses; establishment of IT enabled energy accounting / auditing system, improvement in billed energy based on metered consumption and improvement in collection efficiency.

**Restructured Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (R-APDRP):**
Launched in July 2008 with focus on establishment of base line data, fixation of accountability, reduction of AT&C losses upto 15% level through strengthening & up-gradation of Sub Transmission and Distribution network and adoption of Information Technology during XI Plan.

**Ministry of Panchayati Raj**

1. **A Model Panchayat Citizens Charter**
   A Model Panchayat Citizens Charter/ framework for delivery of the services across the 29 sectors, aligning actions with localised **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, was released recently.
   - It has been prepared by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) in collaboration with **National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR)**.

**Significance:**
The Citizen Charter would ensure transparent and effective delivery of public services for sustainable development and enhanced citizen service experiences; deepening inclusive and accountable Local Self Governments by incorporating diverse views while designing and delivering services.
Need for:
● Panchayats constitute the third tier of government in the rural areas and represent the first level of Government interaction for over 60 per cent of the Indian populace.
● Panchayats are responsible for delivery of basic services as enshrined under article 243G of the Constitution of India, specifically in the areas of Health & Sanitation, Education, Nutrition, Drinking Water.

About Citizens’ Charters:
● Citizens’ Charters initiative is a response to the quest for solving the problems which a citizen encounters, day in and day out, while dealing with the organisations providing public services.
● The concept of Citizens' Charter enshrines the trust between the service provider and its users.
● The concept was first articulated and implemented in the United Kingdom in 1991.

Six principles of the Citizens Charter movement as originally framed, were:
(i) Quality: Improving the quality of services.
(ii) Choice: Wherever possible.
(iii) Standards: Specify what to expect and how to act if standards are not met.
(iv) Value: For the taxpayer’s money.
(v) Accountability: Individuals and Organisations.
(vi) Transparency.

In India:
The concept of citizen’s charter was first adopted at a ‘Conference of Chief Ministers of various States and Union Territories’ held in May 1997 in the national capital.

2. SWAMITVA scheme
The scheme has been extended to all states. Earlier, it was launched only for 9 states.

Overview and key features of the ‘Swamitva Yojana’:
Launched on Panchayati Raj Diwas (April 24th, 2020).
● The scheme seeks to map residential land ownership in the rural sector using modern technology like the use of drones.
● The scheme aims to revolutionise property record maintenance in India.
● The scheme is piloted by the Panchayati Raj ministry.
● Under the scheme, residential land in villages will be measured using drones to create a non-disputable record.
● Property card for every property in the village will be prepared by states using accurate measurements delivered by drone-mapping. These cards will be given to property owners and will be recognised by the land revenue records department.

Benefits of the scheme:
● The delivery of property rights through an official document will enable villagers to access bank finance using their property as collateral.
● The property records for a village will also be maintained at the Panchayat level, allowing for the collection of associated taxes from the owners. The money generated from these local taxes will be used to build rural infrastructure and facilities.
● Freeing the residential properties including land of title disputes and the creation of an official record is likely to result in appreciation in the market value of the properties.
● The accurate property records can be used for facilitating tax collection, new building and structure plan, issuing of permits and for thwarting attempts at property grabbing.

Need for and significance of the scheme:
The need for this Yojana was felt since several villagers in the rural areas don’t have papers proving ownership of their land. In most states, survey and measurement of the populated areas in the villages has not been done for the purpose of attestation/verification of properties. The new scheme is likely to become a tool for empowerment and entitlement, reducing social strife on account of discord over properties.

Ministry of Home Affairs

1. Cybercrime volunteer programme
The Union Home Ministry has said it does not maintain a centralised list of volunteers enrolled under the cybercrime volunteer programme since the police is a “State subject” under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

Background:
In response to a Right to Information Act (RTI) application on the total number of volunteers who have applied under the Cybercrime Volunteers Programme of the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal, the Ministry said the information could be sought directly from the respective States and Union Territories.

About the cybercrime volunteer programme:
Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has envisaged the Cyber Crime Volunteers Program to bring together citizens with passion to serve the nation on a single platform and contribute in the fight against cybercrime in the country. The volunteers are registered, and their services utilised, by the respective State/UTs as per their requirement.
- The programme targets to rope in around 500 persons to flag unlawful content on the Internet.

Roles and functions:
- The volunteers shall “maintain strict confidentiality of tasks assigned/carried out by them”.
- The State Nodal Officer of States/UTs also reserves the right to take legal action against the Volunteer, in case of violation of terms and conditions of the Program.
- The volunteers are barred from issuing any public statement about their association with this program and are also “strictly prohibited” from using the name of Ministry of Home Affairs or claim to have an association with the ministry on any social media or public platform.

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports

1. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund For Sportspersons
The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) has approved an amount of Rs 2 Lakh for Karnataka’s V Tejaswini Bai, who won the Arjuna Award in 2011 and was a member of the Women’s Kabaddi team that won gold medals at the 2010 and 2014 Asian Games respectively.
- The financial assistance has been approved from the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for the Sportspersons (PDUNWFS).

About the Fund:
- Set up in March, 1982 with a view to assisting outstanding Sportspersons of yesteryear, living in indigent circumstances who had brought glory to the Country in sports.
● The scheme was revised in May, 2016 to provide for lump sum ex-gratia assistance to outstanding Sportspersons of yesteryears.

● **Provision of pension has been done away with** as there is already a Scheme of Pension for Meritorious Sportspersons.

**The Fund shall be utilized for the following objectives:**

1. To provide suitable assistance to outstanding sports persons now living in indigent sportspersons.

2. To provide suitable assistance to outstanding sports persons injured during the period of their training for competitions and also during the competitions, depending on the nature of the injury.

3. To provide suitable assistance to outstanding sports persons who bring glory to the country in the international field and who are disabled as an after effect of their strenuous training or otherwise and to provide them assistance for medical treatment.

4. To administrator and apply the funds of the Fund to promote the welfare of the sports persons generally in order to alleviate distress among them and their dependents in indigent circumstances.

5. To administer and apply the funds of the Fund for active sports persons individually or collectively as a group.

6. To do all other things which are incidental to the above objectives.

**NITI Aayog**

1. **Vernacular Innovation Program**
   
   ● Launched by **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, NITI Aayog.
   
   ● It is an initiative to lower the language barrier in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship such that it will systematically decouple creative expressions and languages of transaction.
   
   ● It seeks to enable innovators and entrepreneurs to have access to the innovation ecosystem in 22 scheduled languages.
   
   ● **Implementation**: AIM has identified and will be training a Vernacular Task Force (VTF) in each of the 22 scheduled languages.
   
   ● It will assist in overcoming linguistic barriers and empowering innovators in the farthest parts of the country.

2. **Poshan Gyan**
   
   ● It is a national digital repository on health and nutrition.
   
   ● Launched by NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University.
   
   ● The Poshan Gyan repository is conceptualized as a resource, enabling search of communication materials on 14 thematic areas of health and nutrition across diverse languages, media types, target audiences and sources.
Important Acts / Bills

1. Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)
   - The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act registration is mandatory for any NGO or association to receive foreign funds or donations.
   - The registration of thousands of NGOs was up for renewal in 2020-21. The Home Ministry had declined to renew the FCRA registration of 179 NGOs.

On what basis is approval cancelled?
The government reserves the right to cancel the FCRA registration of any NGO if it finds it to be in violation of the Act.
- Registration can be cancelled if an inquiry finds a false statement in the application; if the NGO is found to have violated any of the terms and conditions of the certificate or renewal; if it has not been engaged in any reasonable activity in its chosen field for the benefit of society for two consecutive years; or if it has become defunct.
- It can also be cancelled if “in the opinion of the Central Government, it is necessary in the public interest to cancel the certificate”, the FCRA says.
- Registrations are also cancelled when an audit finds irregularities in the finances of an NGO in terms of misutilisation of foreign funds.

How FCRA regulates NGO funding?
FCRA regulates foreign donations and ensures that such contributions do not adversely affect the internal security of the country.
The Act, first enacted in 1976 was amended in the year 2010 and then 2020.
Section 5 of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 gives the Union government “unchecked and unbridled powers” to declare an organisation as being one of political nature and deny it access to funds from sources abroad.
- FCRA is implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Registered associations can receive foreign contributions for social, educational, religious, economic and cultural purposes.

Applicability:
- The provisions of the Act apply to the territory of India, to citizens of India who may be outside India and to companies or their branches outside India that are registered or incorporated in India.
- The entities covered by the Act include an individual, a Hindu undivided family, an association, or a registered company.

For how long is approval granted?
Once granted, FCRA registration is valid for five years. NGOs are expected to apply for renewal within six months of the date of expiry of registration. In case of failure to apply for renewal, the registration is deemed to have expired, and the NGO is no longer entitled to receive foreign funds or utilise its existing funds without permission from the ministry.

Prior Reference Category under the Act:
It implies that to donate to such an NGO, a foreign donor has to take prior clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Latest 2020 amendments and criticisms associated:
- The amendments mandated that registered NGOs open a designated account in the main branch of the State Bank of India in the Capital in which the foreign contributions to their various causes would exclusively land.
The petitioners have argued that this measure would be cumbersome for NGOs operating in rural India and far away from the Capital.

**What Is A Foreign Contribution Under FCRA?**
- “Foreign contribution” under FCRA covers any “donation, delivery or transfer made by any foreign source of any article” as long as it is not given as a gift for personal use, or if its market value in India at the time it was made is “not more than such sum as may be specified from time to time by the Central government”.

**Exceptions:**
- Any currency, or security can fall under the ambit of the Act though it excludes any money received “by way of fee or towards cost in lieu of goods or services rendered by such person in the ordinary course of his business, trade or commerce whether within India or outside India”.
- Neither are donations made by Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) considered to be “foreign contribution” although a donation from a person of Indian origin who has assumed foreign nationality is treated as as “foreign contribution”.

**Who Cannot Receive Foreign Contribution?**
A host of entities are barred from receiving foreign funds, including election candidates, those connected with a registered newspaper, judges, government servants or employees of any entity controlled or owned by the government and members of any legislature. Political parties and their office bearers, too, are prohibited from receiving foreign funds.

2. **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**
The Supreme Court has allowed Maharashtra to hold bullock cart races in the state till the pendency of the matter before the constitutional Bench of the apex court.

**About the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960:**
- Seeks to “prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals”.
- The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) was established in 1962 under Section 4 of the Act.
- This Act provides for punishment for causing unnecessary cruelty and suffering to animals. The Act defines animals and different forms of animals.
- It provides the guidelines relating to experimentation on animals for scientific purposes.

**Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Care and Maintenance of Case Property Animals) Rules, 2017:**
- The Rules allow a Magistrate to forfeit the cattle of an owner facing trial under the Act.
- The animals are then sent to infirmaries, animal shelters, etc.
- The authorities can further give such animals for “adoption”.

3. **Model Tenancy Act**
Assam has become the first state to adopt the Model Tenancy Act. With this **Assam Urban Areas Rent Control Act, 1972** gets repealed.

**Impact:**
- New Act will spur growth & development of transparent & accountable rental market & balance the interests of tenants & landlords. It will provide ecosystem for rapid dispute resolution.
Background:
The Union Cabinet, in June 2021, approved the Model Tenancy Act (MTA).
- States and Union territories can now adopt the Model Tenancy Act by enacting fresh legislation or they can amend their existing rental laws suitably.

Highlights of the Model Law:
1. **Applicable prospectively** and will not affect the existing tenancies.
2. **Written agreement is a must** for all new tenancies. The agreement will have to be submitted to the concerned district 'Rent Authority'.
3. The law also speaks about roles and responsibilities of landlord and tenants.
4. **No landlord or property manager can withhold any essential supply** to the premises occupied by the tenant.
5. **If tenancy has not been renewed**, the tenancy shall be deemed to be renewed on a month-to-month basis on the same terms and conditions as were in the expired tenancy agreement, for a maximum period of six months.
6. **Compensation in case of non-vacancy**: On the expiry of extended period of six months of agreed tenancy period or the termination of tenancy by order or notice, the tenant shall be a tenant in default and liable to pay compensation of double of the monthly rent for two months and four times of the monthly rent thereafter.
7. A landlord or property manager may enter a premise in accordance with written notice or notice through electronic medium served to the tenant at least twenty-four hours before the time of entry.

Significance:
It is an important piece of legislation that promises to ease the burden on civil courts, unlock rental properties stuck in legal disputes, and prevent future tangles by balancing the interests of tenants and landlords.

4. **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**
- This Act makes it legally obliging for adult children and heirs to provide for parents by way of a monthly allowance.
- This Act provides an inexpensive and speedy procedure to claim monthly maintenance for parents and senior citizens.
- According to this Act, parents could mean biological, adoptive or step-parents.
- Under this Act, there are also provisions to protect the life and property of such persons (elderly).

Is it mandatory for the state to set up old-age homes as per the law?
Section 19 of the law says, the State Government may establish and maintain such number of oldage homes at accessible places, as it may deem necessary, in a phased manner, beginning with at least one in each district.
- The State Government may also, prescribe a scheme for management of oldage homes.

5. **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**
The Centre amends Food Security rules to prevent ration leakage, corruption.
- The government said that this amendment has been made as an attempt to take forward the reform process envisaged under **Section 12 of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** by way of improving the transparency of the

The Centre has informed the Supreme Court that the States and the Union Territories have purchased nearly 3.7 lakh tonnes of foodgrains at concessional rates from the Food Corporation of India to supply to migrants without ration cards and others outside the protective cover of the National Food Security Act (NFSA).
operation of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) under NFSA.

Significance:
1. This amendment aims to ensure the right quantity to beneficiaries in the distribution of subsidised food grains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 as per their entitlement.
2. It also incentivises states who have been using ePoS efficiently and encourages states to improve efficiency in ePoS operations and generate savings.

The amendment:
According to the amendment, states that are operating their ePoS devices judiciously and are able to generate savings from the additional margin of Rs 17 per quintal can now utilise the savings for purchase, operations and maintenance of electronic weighing scales and their integration with the point of sale devices.

Department of Food & Public Distribution issues directions to States/UTs to include all eligible disabled persons under the National Food Security Act 2013.
- It has also asked the states to ensure that they get their entitled quota of food grains under NFSA & Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.

Enabling provisions:
Section 38 of the Act mandates that the Central Government may from time to time give directions to the State Governments for effective implementation of the provisions of the Act. The Section 10 of the National Food Security Act, 2013 provides for coverage of persons under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana in accordance with the guidelines applicable to the said scheme and the remaining households as priority households in accordance with such guidelines as the States Government may specify.
- Disability is one of the criteria for inclusion of beneficiaries under AAY households

National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:
The objective is to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.

Key features:
- Coverage and entitlement under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS): The TDPS covers 50% of the urban population and 75% of the rural population, with uniform entitlement of 5 kg of food grains per person per month. However, the poorest of the poor households will continue to receive 35 kg of food grains per household per month under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).
- Subsidised prices under TPDS and their revision: For a period of three years from the date of commencement of the Act, Food grains under TPDS will be made available at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grains.
- Identification of Households: The identification of eligible households is to be done by States/UTs under TPDS determined for each State.
- Nutritional Support to women and children: Children in the age group of 6 months to 14 years and pregnant women and lactating mothers will be entitled to meals as per prescribed nutritional norms under Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) schemes. Malnourished children up to the age of 6 have been prescribed for higher nutritional norms.
- Maternity Benefit: Pregnant women and lactating mothers will also be receiving maternity benefit of Rs. 6,000.
Women Empowerment: For the purpose of issuing of ration cards, eldest woman of the household of age 18 years or above is to be the head of the household.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism: Grievance redressal mechanism available at the District and State levels.

Cost of transportation & handling of food grains and Fair Price Shop (FPS) Dealers’ margin: the expenditure incurred by the state on transportation of food grains within the State, its handling and FPS dealers’ margin as per norms to be devised for this purpose and assistance to states will be provided by the Central Government to meet the above expenditure.

Transparency and Accountability: In order to ensure transparency and accountability, provisions have been made for disclosure of records relating to PDS, social audits and setting up of Vigilance Committees.

Food Security Allowance: In case of non-supply of entitled food grains or meals, there is a provision for food security allowance to entitled beneficiaries.

Penalty: If the public servant or authority fails to comply with the relief recommended by the District Grievance Redressal Officer, penalty will be imposed by the State Food Commission according to the provision.

One Nation One Ration Card system:
The Supreme Court has directed all states and UTs to implement the One Nation, One Ration Card system.

What is One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)?
The ONORC scheme is aimed at enabling migrant workers and their family members to buy subsidised ration from any fair price shop anywhere in the country under the National Food Security Act, 2013.

- The One Nation One Ration Card scheme was initially started in four states in August 2019. Now, two years later, it is enabled in 33 states and UTs covering almost 86.7 per cent of the NFSA population (about 690 million NFSA beneficiaries) in the country.

Implementation:
To promote this reform in the archaic Public Distribution System (PDS), the government has provided incentives to states. The Centre had even set the implementation of ONORC as a precondition for additional borrowing by states during the Covid-19 pandemic last year.

- At least 17 states, which implemented the ONORC reform, were allowed to borrow an additional Rs 37,600 crores in 2020-21.

How does ONORC work?
- ONORC is based on technology that involves details of beneficiaries’ ration card, Aadhaar number, and electronic Points of Sale (ePoS).
- The system identifies a beneficiary through biometric authentication on ePos devices at fair price shops.
- The system runs with the support of two portals—Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS) and Annavitran, which host all the relevant data.

6. Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985
The Punjab government has approved a reward policy to encourage information and inputs leading to recovery of drugs under the Narcotic Drugs And Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Highlights:
- The policy will recognise government servants-informers-sources for their role in providing inputs leading to the recovery of substantial quantity of drugs and in successful implementation of various provisions of the NDPS Act, 1985 and PIT NDPS Act, 1988.
The quantum of reward for successful investigation, prosecution, forfeiture of illegally acquired property, preventive detention and other significant anti-drug work shall be decided on case-to-case basis.

**Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985:**

1. The Act is designed to fulfill India’s treaty obligations under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
2. The Act 1985 sets out the statutory framework for drug law enforcement in India.
3. Under the Act, the cultivation, production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transportation, warehousing, consumption, inter-State movement, transshipment and import and export of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is prohibited, except for medical or scientific purposes and in accordance with the terms and conditions of any license, permit or authorization given by the Government.
4. The Central Government is empowered to regulate the cultivation, production, manufacture, import, export, sale, consumption, use etc of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
5. State Governments are empowered to permit and regulate possession and inter-State movement of opium, poppy straw, the manufacture of medicinal opium and the cultivation of cannabis excluding hashish.
6. The Central Government is empowered to declare any substance, based on an assessment of its likely use in the manufacture of narcotics drugs and psychotropic substances as a controlled substance.
7. Both the Central Government and State Governments are empowered to appoint officers for the purposes of the Act.
Organisations / Institutions

1. **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)**
   - **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)** is a Mini Ratna (Category – I) Government of India Enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
   - IREDA is a Public Limited Government Company established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution in 1987 engaged in promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for setting up projects relating to new and renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency/conservation with the motto: “ENERGY FOR EVER”.
   
The main objectives of IREDA are:
   - To give financial support to specific projects and schemes for generating electricity and / or energy through new and renewable sources and conserving energy through energy efficiency.
   - To maintain its position as a leading organization to provide efficient and effective financing in renewable energy and energy efficiency / conservation projects.
   - To increase IREDA’s share in the renewable energy sector by way of innovative financing.
   - Improvement in the efficiency of services provided to customers through continual improvement of systems, processes and resources.
   - To strive to be competitive institution through customer satisfaction.

2. **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**
   - It is a central agency to investigate and prosecute offences:
     - affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, security of State, friendly relations with foreign States.
     - against atomic and nuclear facilities.
     - smuggling in High-Quality Counterfeit Indian Currency.
   
   It is also the **Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency**.
   - It is empowered to deal with terror related crimes across states without special permission from the states.
   - Established under the National Investigation Agency Act 2008.
   - Works under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
   
   **Jurisdiction:**
   - A State Government may request the Central Government to hand over the investigation of a case to the NIA, provided the case has been registered for the offences as contained in the schedule to the NIA Act.
   - Central Government can also order NIA to take over investigation of any scheduled offense anywhere in the India.
   
   **Composition:**
   Officers of the NIA are drawn from the Indian Police Service and Indian Revenue Service.
   
   **Special NIA Courts:**
   - Various Special Courts have been notified by the Central Government of India.
   - Any question as to the jurisdiction of these courts is decided by the Central Government.
   - These are presided over by a judge appointed by the Central Government on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the High Court with jurisdiction in that region.
   - Supreme Court of India has also been empowered to transfer the cases from one special court to any other special court within or outside the state.
Powers:
The NIA Special Courts are empowered with all powers of the court of sessions under Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 for trial of any offense.

Appeals:
An appeal from any judgement, sentence or order, not being an interlocutory order, of a Special Court lies to the High Court both on facts and on law. State Governments have also been empowered to appoint one or more such special courts in their states.

3. **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**
To counter corruption and speed up decision-making in military procurement, the government of India in 2001 decided to set up an integrated DAC.

- **It is headed by the Defence Minister.**
- **Objective:** The objective of the DAC is to ensure expeditious procurement of the approved requirements of the Armed Forces, in terms of capabilities sought, and time frame prescribed, by optimally utilizing the allocated budgetary resources.
- **Functions:** The DAC is responsible to give policy guidelines to acquisitions, based on long-term procurement plans. It also clears all acquisitions, which includes both imported and those produced indigenously or under a foreign license.

4. **National Trust**
The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment had recently organised meetings with officials and other stakeholders of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh for implementation of National Trust Act, 1999.

**Background:**
This act looks into the welfare of people with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities.

- The Act also provides for the setting up of the National Trust.

**About the National Trust:**
The National Trust is a statutory body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

- It was set up under the “National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities” Act.
- Its mandate is to discharge two basic duties – legal and welfare.

**Objectives:**
The objectives of the National Trust in particular are:

- To enable and empower persons with disability to live as independently and as fully as possible within and as close to their community as possible;
- To facilitate the realisation of equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation of persons with disability;
- To extend support to its registered organisations to provide need-based services; and
- To evolve procedures for appointments of guardians and trustees for persons with disabilities.

**Disabilities under NTA:**
The National Trust works for the welfare of persons with any of the following four disabilities:

1. Autism
2. Cerebral Palsy
3. Mental Retardation
4. Multiple Disabilities

www.insightsonindia.com
5. National Crisis Management Committee
For effective implementation of relief measures in the wake of natural calamities, the Government of India has set up a National Crisis Management Committee.

- The Cabinet Secretary is its Chairman.
- Other members: Secretaries of all the concerned Ministries /Departments as well as organizations are the members of the Committee.

The NCMC gives direction to the Crisis Management Group as deemed necessary.

6. National Startup Advisory Council
- Constituted by the ‘Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- Its role is to advise the Government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country to drive sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities.

Functions of NSAC:
- Suggest measures to foster a culture of innovation amongst citizens and students.
- Promote innovation in all sectors of economy across the country, including semi-urban and rural areas.
- Support creative and innovative ideas through incubation and research and development to transform them into valuable products.

Structure of NSAC:
- The National Startup Advisory Council will be chaired by the Minster for Commerce & Industry.
- The Council will consist of the non-official members, to be nominated by the Central Government.
- The nominees of the concerned Ministries/Departments/Organisations, not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India, will be ex-officio members of the Council.

7. Central Consumer Protection Authority
- The new Act recognises offences such as providing false information regarding the quality or quantity of a good or service, and misleading advertisements. It also specifies action to be taken if goods and services are found “dangerous, hazardous or unsafe”.
- The CCPA aims to protect the rights of the consumer by cracking down on unfair trade practices, and false and misleading advertisements that are detrimental to the interests of the public and consumers.
- The CCPA will have the powers to inquire or investigate into matters relating to violations of consumer rights or unfair trade practices suo motu, or on a complaint received, or on a direction from the central government.
- CCPA will have Chief Commissioner as head, and two other commissioners as members.
The CCPA will have an Investigation Wing that will be headed by a Director General.

8. **Department of Consumer Affairs**

Department of Consumer Affairs is one of the two Departments under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. It was constituted as a separate Department in June 1997 as it was considered necessary to have a separate Department to give a fillip to the nascent consumer movement in the country.

**THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH THE FOLLOWING WORK**

- **Implementation of Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016**
- **Implementation of Standards of Weights and Measures** - The Legal Metrology Act, 2009.
- Regulation of Packaged Commodities.
- **The Essential Commodities Act, 1955** (10 of 1955) (Supply, Prices and Distribution of Essential Commodities not dealt with specifically by any other Department).
- Monitoring of prices and availability of essential commodities.
- Direct Selling
- Training in Legal Metrology.
- **The Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1952.**
- Laying down specifications, standards and codes and ensuring quality control of bio-fuels for end uses.
- Consumer Cooperatives
- National Test House.

9. **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**

- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) is the premier R&D organization of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for carrying out R&D in IT, Electronics and associated areas.
- As an institution for high-end Research and Development (R&D), C-DAC has been at the forefront of the Information Technology (IT) revolution, constantly building capacities in emerging/enabling technologies and innovating and leveraging its expertise, caliber, skill sets to develop and deploy IT products and solutions for different sectors of the economy, as per the mandate of its parent, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India and other stakeholders including funding agencies, collaborators, users and the market-place.
1. **PM CARES Fund**

According to the latest Findings, 64 per cent of the Rs 10,990 crore collected by the PM CARES Fund between March 27, 2020, and March 31, 2021, remained unused as of the latter date.

- Billed as a "dedicated fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency and provide relief to the affected", PM CARES spent just Rs 3,976 crore in the first year of its operation.

- The Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund) was created on 27 March 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic in India.

- PM CARES Fund has been registered as a Public Charitable Trust.

- Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance, Government of India are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund.

**Objectives:**

- To undertake and support relief or assistance of any kind relating to a public health emergency or any other kind of emergency, calamity or distress, either man-made or natural, including the creation or upgradation of healthcare or pharmaceutical facilities, other necessary infrastructure, funding relevant research or any other type of support.

- To render financial assistance, provide grants of payments of money or take such other steps as may be deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees to the affected population.

- To undertake any other activity, which is not inconsistent with the above Objects.

**Other Details:**

- The fund consists entirely of voluntary contributions from individuals/organizations and does not get any budgetary support. The fund will be utilised in meeting the objectives as stated above.

- Donations to PM CARES Fund would qualify **100% exemption under the Income Tax Act, 1961.** Donations to PM CARES Fund will also qualify to be counted as **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure** under the Companies Act, 2013.

- PM CARES Fund has also got **exemption under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)** and a separate account for receiving foreign donations has been opened. This enables PM CARES Fund to accept donations and contributions from individuals and organizations based in foreign countries. This is consistent with respect to Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund (PMNRF). PMNRF has also received foreign contributions as a public trust since 2011.

Stating that **PM CARES FUNDS is not a 'public authority'** under **Section 2(h) of the Right to Information Act, 2005,** the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) had refused to divulge information sought in an application filed under the RTI Act.

**What is 'public authority' under RTI?**

As per **Section 2(h) of the RTI Act,** "public authority" is means **any authority or body or institution of self-government established or constituted:**

1. by or under the Constitution;
2. by any other law made by Parliament;
3. by any other law made by State Legislature;
4. by notification issued or order made by the appropriate Government.

The definition of ‘public authority’ also includes bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed by the government and non-governmental organizations substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate Government.
Supreme Court had delivered its judgement on PM CARES funds.  

### Highlights of the judgment:

1. The Court had “refused” to order transfer of funds from the PM CARES Fund to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). They “are two entirely different funds with different object and purpose”.
2. PM CARES Fund, being a public charitable trust, “there is no occasion for audit by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India”.

### 2. Caste census

Recently the Supreme Court upheld the 27% quota for Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the All-India Quota seats for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test and reiterated that reservations for backward classes were not an exception but an extension of the principle of equality under Article 15(1) of the Constitution.

- This is seen as a positive discrimination in the Indian Context.

### How have caste details been collected so far?

1. While SC/ST details are collected as part of the census, details of other castes are not collected by the enumerators. The main method is by self-declaration to the enumerator.
2. So far, backward classes commissions in various States have been conducting their own counts to ascertain the population of backward castes.

### What kind of caste data is published in the Census?

Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes. Before that, every Census until 1931 had data on caste.

### What is SECC 2011?

The Socio-Economic Caste Census of 2011 was a major exercise to obtain data about the socio-economic status of various communities.

- It had two components: a survey of the rural and urban households and ranking of these households based on pre-set parameters, and a caste census.
- However, only the details of the economic conditions of the people in rural and urban households were released. The caste data has not been released till now.

### Difference between Census & SECC:

- The Census provides a portrait of the Indian population, while the SECC is a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support.
- Since the Census falls under the Census Act of 1948, all data are considered confidential, whereas all the personal information given in the SECC is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households.

### Pros of caste census:

The precise number of the population of each caste would help tailor the reservation policy to ensure equitable representation of all of them.

### 3. Saffron Bowl Project

North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR) under Saffron Bowl project has identified few locations in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya for saffron cultivation.
● Saffron production has long been restricted to a limited geographical area in the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

● Pampore region, in India, commonly known as Saffron bowl of Kashmir, is the main contributor to saffron production, followed by Budgam, Srinagar, and Kishiwara districts.

● Saffron has traditionally been associated with the famous Kashmiri cuisine.

● It’s medicinal values were considered as part of the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir.

● As saffron growing was confined to very specific areas in Kashmir, its production remained limited.

● Though the National Mission on Saffron focused on several measures to improve its farming, the measures were still limited to the specified areas of Kashmir.

4. **Operation AAHT**

● It is a nationwide operation to curb human trafficking.

● Launched by the Railway Protection Force.

● As part of “Operation AAHT”, special teams will be deployed on all long-distance trains/routes with focus on rescuing victims, particularly women and children, from the clutches of traffickers.

5. **Paray Shikshalaya**

The West Bengal government on Monday (February 7) launched ‘Paray Shikshalaya’ – an open-air classroom in the neighbourhood programme – for students from class 1 to 7.

● The aim of this initiative is to encourage students who dropped out of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic to continue their education.

6. **Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development**

The Government of India, the State Governments of Karnataka and Odisha and the World Bank have signed a $115 million Programme (Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development Programme).

● REWARD stands for Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development.

● The project aims to help national and state institutions adopt improved watershed management practices to help increase farmers’ resilience to climate change, promote higher productivity and better incomes.

**Significance:**

The Government of India has committed to restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 and doubling farmers’ income by 2023. Effective watershed management can help enhance livelihoods in rainfed areas, while building a more resilient food system.

7. **Kerala’s SilverLine Project**

Large sections of the people have been protesting against SilverLine over its “lack” of financial viability as well as environmental and social impact.

What is the SilverLine project?

● The proposed 529.45-km line will link Thiruvananthapuram in the south to Kasaragod in the north, covering 11 districts through 11 stations.

● Being executed by the Kerala Rail Development Corporation Limited (KRDCL), or K-Rail, is a joint venture between the...
Kerala government and the Union Ministry of Railways created to execute this project.

**Features of the Project:**
- The project will have trains of electric multiple unit (EMU) type, each with preferably nine cars extendable to 12.
- A nine-car rake can seat a maximum of 675 passengers in business and standard class settings.
- The trains can run at a maximum speed of 220 km/hr on a standard gauge track, completing journeys in either direction in fewer than four hours.
- At every 500 metres, there will be under-passages with service roads.

8. **District Good Governance Index (DGGI)**

Union home minister Amit Shah recently launched the **District Good Governance Index (DGGI)** in Jammu and Kashmir, which is the **first Union Territory to have such an index**.

**About the index:**
- It has been prepared by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in partnership with the Union Territory's administration.
- Under the index, the policies, schemes and programs of the central as well as the state governments have been monitored at the district level.

**Significance of the index:**
- The beginning of this index in Jammu and Kashmir will slowly expand to all other states and a good governance competition will start in every district of the country.
- The index covered **10 sectors and 58 indicators**.
- The index will **benefit residents of Jammu and Kashmir** in a big way as it will work towards improving the district machinery, make districts result-oriented and also improve their delivery mechanism.

**Performance of J&K in the National Good Governance Index:**
- Previously, the Centre had released the **National Good Governance Index** on December 25 last year that indicated Jammu and Kashmir saw an increase of 3.7% in Good Governance Indicators from 2019 to 2021.

9. **Universal Accessibility in India**

The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has released the “Harmonised Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India”.

**Highlights:**
- The new guidelines have covered several aspects of built environment, ranging from design plan to the implementation.
- As per new guidelines, ramps are significant for providing an accessible mobility option. But ramps should adhere to given guidelines.
- Guidelines have been provided for persons with disabilities (PwD) as well as for those involved in planning projects, starting from construction of government buildings to master-planning cities.
- It calls to incorporate accessibility symbols for PwD, family-friendly facilities and transgender, among the symbols for other user groups.

10. **Tamil Nadu makes it mandatory to stand while state song is being played**

The Tamil Nadu government has declared **Tamil Thai Vaazhthu**, a prayer song sung in praise of Mother Tamil, as the **State Song**.
A Government Order (GO) had been issued directing that everyone who is present during the rendition of the song, barring differently abled persons, should remain standing.

What’s the issue now?
The order has come less than two weeks after the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court said (Kan. Ilango v. State case) that “There is no statutory or executive order requiring the attendees to stand up when Tamil Thai Vazhthu is sung.”

What has the Supreme Court in this regard previously?
- The High Court referred to Bijoe Emmanuel vs. State of Kerala case (1986), in which the Supreme Court ordered the readmission to school of three children of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who had been expelled for refusing to sing the national anthem. It was noted (by the Supreme Court) that there is no provision of law which obliges anyone to sing the National Anthem.
- Again, while the Supreme Court had, in Shyam Narayan Chouksey v. Union of India (2017), directed that all cinema halls shall play the national anthem before the film and all present are obliged to stand, it had modified the original directions and made it “optional and not mandatory”.

11. Special Category Status
The government has extended a special package in lieu of the Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh.

What is Special Category Status?
- There is no provision of SCS in the Constitution; the Central government extends financial assistance to states that are at a comparative disadvantage against others.
- This classification was done on the recommendations of the Fifth Finance Commission in 1969.
- SCS was first accorded in 1969 to Jammu and Kashmir, Assam and Nagaland. Since then eight more states have been included (Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand).

It was based on the Gadgil formula. The parameters for SCS were:
1. Hilly Terrain;
2. Low Population Density And/Or Sizeable Share of Tribal Population;
3. Strategic Location along Borders With Neighbouring Countries;
4. Economic and Infrastructure Backwardness; and

Some prominent guidelines for getting SCS status:
1. Must be economically backward with poor infrastructure.
2. The states must be located in hilly and challenging terrain.
3. They should have low population density and significant tribal population.
4. Should be strategically situated along the borders of neighboring countries.

Who grants SCS status?
Special Category Status for plan assistance was granted in the past by the National Development Council to the States that are characterized by a number of features necessitating special consideration.
- Now, it is done by the central government.

Benefits:
Besides tax breaks and other benefits, the State with SCS will get 90% of all the expenditure on Centrally sponsored schemes as Central grant. The rest of the 10% will also be given as a loan at zero percent interest.

12. Good Governance Index 2021
Good Governance Index 2021 was launched on the occasion of the Good Governance Day (December 25).

About the GGI:
Prepared by the Department of Administration Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
- The objectives of GGI are to provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all states and union territories, enable them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance and shift to result oriented approaches and administration.

The GGI 2021 framework covered 10 sectors and 58 indicators:
- The sectors are agriculture and allied sectors, commerce and industries, human resource development, public health, public infrastructure and utilities, economic governance, social welfare and development, judicial and public security, environment and citizen-centric governance.

The GGI 2020-21 categorizes states and union territories into four categories:
- Other states - Group A; other states - group B; North-East and hill states and union territories.

13. Open Acreage Licensing Policy
India has offered eight blocks of oil and gas in the seventh bid round of Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP).
- The objective is to bring more area under exploration, leading to increase in domestic production and reduction of imports.

What is OALP?
Launched under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) in 2017.
- Under OALP, companies are allowed to carve out areas they want to explore oil and gas in.
- Companies can put in an expression of interest (EOI) for any area throughout the year but such interests are accumulated thrice in a year. The areas sought are then offered for bidding.
- It provides uniform licences for exploration and production of all forms of hydrocarbons, enabling contractors to explore conventional as well as unconventional oil and gas resources.
- Fields are offered under a revenue-sharing model and throw up marketing and pricing freedom for crude oil and natural gas produced.
14. Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme

'Bhumi Samvaad' - a National Workshop on Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) was held recently at India Habitat Centre here in the national capital.

- **Unique Land Parcel Identification Numbers (ULPIN)** is just like the Aadhar Number of land parcels.
- A unique ID based on **Geo-coordinates** of the parcels is generated and assigned to the plots.

**About the Scheme:**
- Under the scheme, a 14-digit identification number will be issued to every plot of land in the country.
- It is being described as “the Aadhaar for land” — a number that would uniquely identify every surveyed parcel of land and prevent land fraud, especially in rural India, where land records are outdated and disputed.
- The identification will be based on the longitude and latitude of the land parcel, and is dependent on detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps.

**Benefits:**
The benefits of ULPIN are multitudinous. The single source of information can authenticate the ownership and in turn it can end the dubious ownership. It will help identify the government lands easily and protect land from shabby land transaction.

15. ‘Bharat Gaurav’ scheme

- To tap the huge potential of tourism, the Railways has announced the ‘Bharat Gaurav’ scheme, under which theme-based tourist circuit trains, on the lines of the Ramayana Express, can be run either by private or State-owned operators.
- Service providers, who can be an individual, company, society, trust, joint venture or consortium, will be free to decide themes and circuits such as Guru Kripa trains for covering important places of Sikh culture or the Ramayana Express for places connected with Lord Ram.

16. Inner Line Permits

It is a document required by non-natives to visit or stay in a state that is protected under the ILP system.

At present, four North-eastern states are covered, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland. Inner line permit is also mandatory for entering into Lakshadweep.

- Both the duration of stay and the areas allowed to be accessed for any non native are determined by the ILP.
- The ILP is issued by the concerned state government and can be availed both by applying online or in person.

An ILP is **only valid for domestic tourists**.

**Rationale behind:**
The Inner Line Permit is an extension of the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873**. After the British occupied the Northeast, the colonisers started exploiting the region and its resources for economic benefits.

- They first started tea plantations and oil industries in Brahmaputra Valley.
- The indigenous tribes living in the hill areas would regularly conduct raids into the plains to loot and plunder, marauding the tea gardens, oil rigs and trading posts set up by the British East India Company.
- It was in this context that the BEFR 1873 was promulgated.
17. Indemnity from liability

Serum Institute had asked for indemnity from liability, stating that all vaccine manufacturers, whether Indian or foreign, should be protected against legal suits for any severe side effects.

What is indemnity clause?

In simple terms, indemnity means security against a loss or other financial stress.

- In legal terms, it means a contractual obligation of one party to compensate another party due to the acts of the former.
- The clause is commonly used in insurance contracts.

In the case of India, if the government gives an indemnity to foreign vaccine makers to roll out their vaccine in the country, the government, and not the vaccine maker, would be liable to compensate any citizen who claims to have side effects after taking the vaccine jab.

What are 'Bridging trials'?

'Bridging trials' are localised clinical trials which generate data related to the impact of foreign medicines/vaccines on the indigenous population before they are rolled out for the public. These trials are important in ascertaining the efficacy and potential side-effects related to the medicine/vaccine.

- Besides clearance on indemnity clause, foreign vaccine makers including Pfizer and Moderna had sought relaxation on the requirement for a post-approval bridging trial for its vaccine.

Are there any exceptions to indemnification?

There are a number of common exceptions to indemnification. An indemnification provision may exclude indemnification for claims or losses that result from the indemnified party’s:

1. Negligence or gross negligence.
2. Improper use of the products.
3. Bad faith failure to comply with its obligations in the agreement.

18. Hallmarking of gold

The government had announced the phased implementation of mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery with effect from June 16, 2021.

What is hallmarking of gold?

Hallmarking is the “accurate determination and official recording of the proportionate content of precious metal in precious metal articles.”

- So, it is like a “guarantee of purity or fineness” of precious metal articles.
- The Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) operates gold and silver hallmarking scheme in India.

Metals covered under the purview of hallmarking:

1. Gold jewellery and gold artefacts.
2. Silver jewellery and silver artefacts.

Exceptions:

2. Watches, fountain pens and special types of jewellery such as Kundan, Polki and Jadau.

What was the need of making hallmarking mandatory?

1. India is the biggest consumer of gold. However, the level of hallmarked jewellery is very low in the country- only 30% of Indian gold jewellery is hallmarked. Main reason behind this is non-availability of sufficient assaying and hallmarking centres (A&HC).
2. The mandatory hallmarking will protect the public against lower caratage and ensure consumers do not get cheated while buying gold ornaments.
3. It will also help to get the purity as marked on the ornaments.
4. It will bring in transparency and assure the consumers of quality.

19. Integrated Theatre Command
An integrated theatre command envisages a unified command of the three Services, under a single commander, for geographical areas that are of strategic and security concern.
- The commander of such a force will be able to bear all resources at his disposal — from the Army, the Indian Air Force, and the Navy — with seamless efficacy.
- The integrated theatre commander will not be answerable to individual Services.
- Integration and jointness of the three forces will avoid duplication of resources. The resources available under each service will be available to other services too.
- The Shekatkar committee has recommended the creation of 3 integrated theatre commands — northern for the China border, western for the Pakistan border, and southern for the maritime role.

20. Why and how of creating a district?
Malerkotla became the 23rd district in Punjab.

How are new districts carved?
- The power to create new districts or alter or abolish existing districts rests with the State governments.
- This can either be done through an executive order or by passing a law in the State Assembly.
- Many States prefer the executive route by simply issuing a notification in the official gazette.

Does the Central government have a role to play here?
The Centre has no role to play in the alteration of districts or creation of new ones. States are free to decide.
- The Home Ministry comes into the picture when a State wants to change the name of a district or a railway station.
  - The State government’s request is sent to other departments and agencies such as the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Posts, Geographical Survey of India Sciences and the Railway Ministry seeking clearance. A no-objection certificate may be issued after examining their replies.

21. MANAS app
- MANAS App is a well-being App that stands for Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System.
- It is endorsed as a national program by the Prime Minister’s Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- MANAS is a comprehensive, scalable, and national digital wellbeing platform and an app developed to augment the mental well-being of Indian citizens.
- MANAS App integrates the health and wellness efforts of various government ministries, scientifically validated indigenous tools with gamified interfaces developed/researched by various national bodies and research institutions.
22. Faceless Appeal Scheme, 2021

- The Income Tax department has brought in changes to the existing faceless appeal scheme, easing the process for taxpayers wanting a personal hearing through video conference while appealing against a tax demand by the department.
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) notified the ‘Faceless Appeal Scheme, 2021’.
- However, a person would not be permitted to appear before the Income-Tax authority either personally or through an authorised representative in connection with any proceedings under this scheme.
- Under the previous ‘Faceless Appeal Scheme, 2020, a taxpayer’s request for a personal hearing for making oral submissions, required the approval of the Chief Commissioner or the Director General of I-T, in charge of the Regional Faceless Appeal Centre.

23. Sandes App

- Sandes, which is the Indian government’s instant messaging app, is now accessible to everyone. Previously, it was only available for government officials.
- The app has been launched by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), to give a boost to Digital India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) initiative.
- This is an end-to-end encrypted messaging app, which is aimed as an alternative to WhatsApp.
- The app’s name is displayed as GIMS (Government Instant Messaging System). But, the government is calling it as Sandes
- Sandes has an interface similar to WhatsApp and you will find most of the WhatsApp features in this app.