Chronicle Value Addition Special

Public Policies & Welfare Schemes

Civil Services

CHRONICLE

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Value Addition Special

PUBLIC POLICIES & WELFARE SCHEMES

For Civil Services General Studies Preliminary & Main Examinations

CHRONICLE

Nurturing Talent Since 1990

PUBLIC POLICIES & WELFARE SCHEMES

- ➔ **This book offers a comprehensive, concise and crisp compilation of important policies and schemes launched by the government in the past 10 years.**
- ➔ **The content has been developed and updated, keeping in mind the specific needs of UPSC/State PSCs Civil Services Examinations. It will be helpful in preparation for Prelims, Mains, Interview and Essay.**
- ➔ **In Civil Services Examinations as well as other graduate-level competitive examinations, questions are invariably asked from policies and schemes section.**

Editor

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Social Justice

This section explores social justice, emphasizing equal economic, political, and social rights for all. It covers government Acts and Amendments aimed at ensuring these rights are upheld without bias, promoting fairness and equality across society.

Amendments to Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022

Notification Date: February 2024

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

The Union government on February 21, 2024 modified the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022, to permit married couples to use donor eggs or donor sperm for surrogacy — a move that provided a big relief to those with medical complications. This revoked a previous amendment made in March 2023 that banned the use of such donor gametes.

Key Amendments

- It allowed the use of a donor gamete if one partner is certified by the district medical board to have a condition preventing the use of their own gametes.
- Usually, both gametes must come from the intending couple, but now surrogacy using a donor gamete is permitted as long as the child has at least one gamete from the intending couple.
- Single women (widow or divorcee) must use their own eggs and donor sperm for surrogacy, highlighting a specific provision for their access to surrogacy procedures.
- Further, District Magistrate Board should certify that either the wife or the husband is going through a medical condition.
- The change is however not applicable to widowed or divorced women. The modified rules state, "Single woman (widow or divorcee) undergoing surrogacy must use self-eggs and donor sperms to avail surrogacy procedure."

Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021

- Under the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, a woman who is a widow or a divorcee between the age of 35 to 45 years or a couple, defined as a legally married woman and man, can avail of surrogacy if they have a medical condition necessitating this option.
- The intended couple shall be a legally married Indian man and woman, the man shall be between the ages of 26-55 years and the woman shall be between the ages of 25-50 years, and shall not have any previous biological, adopted, or surrogate child.
- It also bans commercial surrogacy, which is punishable with a jail term of 10 years and a fine of up to Rs. 10 lakhs.
- The law allows only altruistic surrogacy where no money exchanges hands and where a surrogate mother is genetically related to those seeking a child.

POSH Act, 2013

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD)

On 19th October, 2023, the Supreme Court of India (SC) directed Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) of all states/UTs to appoint district officers under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) to ensure the effective implementation of the law.

- The Supreme Court's directives aim to strengthen the implementation of the POSH Act, ensuring that it fulfills its intended purpose of preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace.
- The SC found that many states had not bothered to notify District Officers under the POSH Act all these years. Therefore, it directed all states to immediately appoint district officers under the POSH Act.

Key Directions

- **District Officers:** The POSH Act mandates states to appoint an officer in every district who would play a "pivotal" role in the implementation of the Act.
  - The District Officer would constitute Local Complaints Committees (LCCs) to receive complaints from women employed in small establishments with less than 10 workers or cases in which the assailant is the employer himself.
  - A District Officer's responsibilities also included appointing nodal officers under the Act in rural, tribal and urban areas.
- **Nodal Persons:** Every State/UT through its Principal Secretary should consider identifying a 'nodal person' within the Department, to oversee and aid in coordination as contemplated under the POSH Act.
  - This person would also be able to coordinate with the Union Government on matters relating to this Act and its implementation.

Indian Economy

Economic policies are vital in the perspective of any country. Thus, this section examines economic policies crucial for India's development, including industrial, trade, monetary, fiscal, and agricultural policies. It covers various Acts and Rules related to infrastructure, agriculture, banking and industry, highlighting their impact on the Indian economy.

RBI Guidelines on Penal Charges on Loan Accounts

Notification Date: April 2024

Nodal Organisation: Reserve Bank of India

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest guidelines on penal charges on loan accounts has come into effect from 1st April, 2024.

About the Guidelines

- **Prohibition:** The norms prohibit commercial banks and finance companies from charging borrowers' penal rates on loan defaults or any other non-compliance event.
- **Penal Charges:** Under the new rules, penalty, if charged, for non-compliance of the material terms and conditions of the loan contract by the borrower should be treated as 'penal charges'.
- **Penal Interest:** It cannot be levied in the form of 'penal interest' that is added to the rate of interest charged on the advances.
- **No Capitalisation of Penal Charges:** There should be no capitalisation of penal charges; that is no further interest computed on such charges.
- **No Cap Charges for Penal Charges:** There is any upper limit or cap for penal charges. However, the guidelines stipulated that the quantum of penal charges would be reasonable and commensurate with the non-compliance without being discriminatory within a particular loan category.
- **Following Board Policy:** In order to prevent banks from imposing arbitrary rates of interest, they are meant to follow a board approved policy on penal charges on similar charges on loans.
- **Exceptions:** These guidelines will not apply to credit cards, which are covered under product specific directions.

The Telecommunications Act, 2023

Date of Notification: December 2023

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Communications & Information Technology

In December, 2023, the President gave assent to the Telecommunications Bill, 2023. It replaced the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933, and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950.

Key Features

- **Authorisation for Telecom-related Activities:** Prior authorisation from the central government will be required to provide telecommunication services, establish, operate, maintain, or expand telecommunications networks, or possess radio equipment.
  - Existing licenses will continue to be valid for the period of their grant, or for five years, where the period is not specified.
- **Spectrum Allocation:** Spectrum will be assigned by auction, except for specified uses, where it will be allocated on an administrative basis.
  - These include purposes such as national security and defense, disaster management, weather forecasting, transport, satellite services such as DTH and satellite telephony, and BSNL, MTNL, and public broadcasting services.
- **Satellite Internet Allotment:** It introduces provisions for allocating spectrum to satellite Internet providers like OneWeb (supported by Bharti) and U.S.-based companies such as SpaceX's Starlink.
- **Powers of Interception and Search:** Messages or a class of messages between two or more persons may be intercepted, monitored, or blocked on certain grounds.
  - Such actions must be necessary or expedient in the interest of public safety or public emergency, and must be in the interest of specified grounds which include: security of the state, prevention of incitement of offenses, or public order.
  - Telecom services may be suspended on similar grounds.
- **Protection of Users:** The Central government may provide for measures to protect users which include: prior consent to receive specified messages such as advertising messages, creation of Do Not Disturb registers, and a mechanism to allow users to report malware or specified messages.
  - Biometric Authentication is mandatory for telecom customers to combat spam calls and messages.

Polity & Governance

Laws ensure citizens' safety and protection against any tyranny. Thus, this section delves into rights and laws enforced to protect people at local, state, and national levels. It covers various Acts and Amendments of the Government of India that safeguard citizens and ensure their well-being.

The Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023

Presidential Assent: December 2023

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

The Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023 replaced the Press and Registration of Books (PRB) Act, 1867, which governed the registration of print and publishing industry in the country since 1867.

Salient Features

- **Grant of Title Allotment and Certificate of Registration Periodicals:** The Act provides for a simple online mechanism to apply for title verification and grant of certificate of registration by the Press Registrar General to a periodical as a simultaneous process.
  - There is no requirement of furnishing any declaration before the local authority or its authentication by the local authority.
  - A person who has been convicted by any court for an offence involving terrorist act or unlawful activity, or having done anything against the security of the State shall not be permitted to bring out a periodical.
  - Facsimile edition of a foreign periodical can be printed in India with prior approval of the Central Government and its registration with the Press Registrar General.
- **Printing Presses:** A printer of a periodical to furnish an online intimation to the Press Registrar General and the local authority.
  - No requirement by the Printer to file any declaration before the local authority or obtain authentication from the authority.
- **Role of District Magistrate(DM)/Local Authority:** It envisages minimalistic role of the District Magistrate/local authority with regard to grant of Certificate of Registration and title allotment.
  - On receipt of an application, the District Magistrate is expected to provide its comments/NOC to the Press Registrar General within 60 days; thereafter the Press Registrar General can proceed to take a decision for grant of registration even where the comments/NOC are not received from the DM/local authority after 60 days.
  - No requirement for a publisher to file any declaration before the District Magistrate.
- **Penalties and Appeals:** The Act empowers the Press Registrar General to levy penalties for unregistered periodical publication or failure to furnish annual statements within specified timelines.
  - Non-compliance with these directives may lead to imprisonment for up to six months.
  - Additionally, provisions for appeals against refusal of registration certificates, suspension/cancellation of registration, or imposed penalties are available, with a 60-day window to file appeals before the Press and Registration Appellate Board.

The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023

Presidential Assent: December 2023

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Law and Justice

The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 replaced the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.

- It provides for the appointment, salary, and removal of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs).

Salient Features

- **Election Commission:** The Election Commission will consist of a Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs). The President will periodically fix the number of ECs.
- **Selection Committee:** The Commission will be appointed by the President, upon the recommendation of the Selection Committee.
  - The Selection Committee will comprise the Prime Minister, Cabinet Minister, and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha (or leader of the single largest opposition party).
- **Search Committee:** A Search Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary will suggest five names to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee may consider any person other than those suggested by the Search Committee.

Environment

This section explores essential Acts and Rules for maintaining a pollution-free environment. It includes guidelines on waste management, fossil fuel alternatives, coastal zone management, and disaster management, aiming to foster sustainable and effective environmental stewardship.

The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 2024

Presidential Assent: February 2024

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 2024 amended the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

- The Act establishes the central and state pollution control boards (CPCB and SPCBs) to prevent and control water pollution.
- The Act decriminalizes several violations, and instead imposes penalties.

Key Features

- **Consent Exemptions for Establishing Industries:** As per the Act, prior consent of the SPCB is required for establishing any industry or treatment plant, which is likely to discharge sewage into a water body, sewer, or land.
- The Amendment Act specifies that the central government, in consultation with the CPCB, may exempt certain categories of industrial plants from obtaining such consent.
- **Chairman of State Board:** Under the Act, chairman of an SPCB is nominated by the state government.
- The Amendment Act adds that the central government will prescribe the manner of nomination and the terms and conditions of service of the chairman.
- **Discharge of Polluting Matter:** Under the Act, the SPCB may issue directions to immediately restrain any activity which is leading to discharge of noxious or polluting matter in water bodies.
- Violation of these provisions is punishable with an imprisonment term between one and a half years and six years, and a fine. The Amendment Act removes the punishment and instead, imposes a penalty between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15 lakh.
- **Penalty for other Offences:** Under the Act, an offence for which punishment is not explicitly specified is punishable with an imprisonment term of up to three months or a fine of up to Rs. 10,000, or both.
- The Amendment Act removes imprisonment as a punishment, and prescribes a penalty between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15 lakh.
- Failure to pay penalty for violation of any provision under the Act will attract an imprisonment term of up to three years, or a fine up to twice the amount of penalty imposed.
- **Adjudicating Officer to Determine Penalties:** The Amendment Act allows the central government to appoint adjudication officers to determine penalties under the Act.
- Appeals against orders passed by the adjudicating officer may be made before the National Green Tribunal, after depositing 10% of the penalty levied.
- Penalties imposed by the adjudicating officer will be credited to the Environment Protection Fund established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- **Cognizance of Offences:** As per the Act, a court may take cognizance of an offence if a complaint is made by the CPCB or SPCB, or a person who has given a notice of the complaint to the Boards.
- The Amendment Act adds that cognizance may also be taken if a complaint is made by the adjudicating officer.
- **Offences by Government Departments:** Under the Act, the head of a department will be deemed guilty for offences committed by government departments, provided that they prove due diligence was carried out to avoid such contravention.
- The Amendment Act specifies that the head of a department will be required to pay penalty equal to one month of their basic salary if the department violates any provision of the Act.

Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2023

Presidential Assent: August, 2023

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023 amended the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to make it applicable to certain types of land.

Salient Features

- **Preamble and Name Change**: The amendments introduce a preamble that emphasizes India's commitment to preserving forests, biodiversity, and addressing climate change challenges.

Science & Technology

This section delves into key Acts and Rules governing advancements in health, space exploration, and digital communication. It provides a comprehensive overview of regulatory frameworks essential for fostering innovation and ensuring technological progress.

FDI Policy Amendments in Space Sector

Notification: 16 April, 2024

Nodal Organisation: Department of Space

The government has notified amendments to the foreign direct investment policy in the space sector to attract offshore investors in satellite manufacturing and satellite launch vehicles segments.

These rules may be called the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) (Third Amendment) Rules, 2024.

Key Points

- Under the existing FDI policy, foreign investment of up to 100% is permitted in satellite establishment and operations with the prior approval of the Government, subject to sectoral guidelines issued by the Department of Space/Indian Space Research Organization.
- This essentially meant that approval of the Government is required for any foreign participation in the establishment and operation of satellites.
- Recently, on February 21, 2024, the Union Cabinet approved amendments to the FDI policy applicable to the space sector.
- Pursuant to such amendments to the FDI policy notified on March 5, 2024 (to be effective from the date of amendment notification under the Indian exchange control regulations), 100% foreign investment has been permitted in the space sector, with varying sub-limits applicable to the three different sub-sectors as set out below:

Activity/Entry Route/ Sectoral Cap

1. Satellites – manufacturing and operation, satellite data products and ground segment and user segment:
   - Up to 74%, automatic route (i.e., without Government approval).
   - Beyond 74% and up to 100%, subject to approval of the Government
2. **Launch vehicles and associated systems or subsystems, creation of spaceports for launching and receiving spacecraft**:
   - Up to 49%, automatic route (i.e., without Government approval)
   - Beyond 49% and up to 100%, subject to approval of the Government
3. Manufacturing of components and systems/subsystems for satellites, ground segment and user segment:
   - 100%, automatic route (i.e., without Government approval)

- By clarifying the limits on foreign investment applicable for various space-related activities, the amendments to the FDI policy are expected to promote foreign investment in the space sector, including satellite communications.

Indian Space Policy, 2023

Approval Date: April 2023

Nodal Organisation: Department of Space

On 6th April 2023, the Government of India approved Indian Space Policy 2023. This national space policy seeks to institutionalise private sector participation in the space sector with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) focusing on research and development of advanced space technologies.

Key Points

- The Indian Space Policy, 2023, which is applicable to any space activity to or from India, permits non-government entities to, inter-alia,
  - offer space-based communication services through self-owned or procured or leased Geo-Stationary Orbit ("GSO")/Non-Geo-Stationary Orbit ("NGSO") communication satellites; and
  - use any GSO and/or NGSO slot along with the associated frequency spectrum and coverage to establish communication services, subject to guidelines prescribed by Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre ("IN-SPACe").
- Under the Indian Space Policy, 2023, the IN-SPACe has been designated as the single window agency for the authorization of space activities. So far, Eutelsat OneWeb India has received approval from IN-SPACe for satellite broadband services.
- IN-SPACe has been empowered to authorize the use of space objects for communication services to or from India in coordination with other relevant departments of the Indian Government. For example, use of authorized space objects for

National Security

This section examines government policies on defence acquisition and procurement, highlighting strategies for enhancing national security. It covers the frameworks guiding defence investments and the strategic importance of maintaining robust and efficient defence capabilities.

The Essential Defence Services Act, 2021

Presidential Assent: 11 August 2021

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Defence

The Essential Defence Services Act, 2021 replaced the Ordinance promulgated in June 2021. The Act allows the Central Government to prohibit strikes, lock-outs, and lay-offs in units engaged in essential defence services.

Key Features

- **Essential Defence Services:** Essential defence services include any service in:
  (i) any establishment or undertaking dealing with production of goods or equipment required for defence related purposes, or
  (ii) any establishment of the armed forces or connected with them or defence. These also include services that, if ceased, would affect the safety of the establishment engaged in such services or its employees.

In addition, the government may declare any service as an essential defence service if its cessation would affect the:

(i) production of defence equipment or goods,
(ii) operation or maintenance of industrial establishments or units engaged in such production, or
(iii) repair or maintenance of products connected with defence.

- **Public Utility Service:** The Act amends the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 to include essential defence services under public utility services. Under the Act, in case of public utility services, a six-week notice must be given before:
  (i) persons employed in such services go on strike in breach of contract or
  (ii) employers carrying on such services do lock-outs.
- **Strikes:** Under the Act, strike is defined as cessation of work by a body of persons acting together. It includes:
  (i) mass casual leave,
  (ii) coordinated refusal of any number of persons to continue to work or accept employment,
  (iii) refusal to work overtime, where such work is necessary for maintenance of essential defence services, and
  (iv) any other conduct which results in, or is likely to result in, disruption of work in essential defence services.
- **Prohibition on Strikes, Lock-Outs, and Lay-Offs:** Under the Act, the central government may prohibit strikes, lock-outs, and lay-offs in units engaged in essential defence services. The government may issue such order if necessary in the interest of:
  (i) sovereignty and integrity of India,
  (ii) security of any state,
  (iii) public order,
  (iv) public,
  (v) decency, or
  (vi) morality.

The prohibition order will remain in force for six months, and may be extended by another six months.

- **Punishment for Illegal Lock-Outs and Lay-Offs:** Employers violating the prohibition order through illegal lock-outs or lay-offs will be punished with up to one year imprisonment or Rs. 10,000 fine, or both.
- **Punishment for Illegal Strikes:** Persons commencing or participating in illegal strikes will be punished with up to one year imprisonment or Rs 10,000 fine, or both.
- Persons instigating, inciting, or taking actions to continue illegal strikes, or knowingly supplying money for such purposes, will be punished with up to two years imprisonment or Rs. 15,000 fine, or both.
- Further, such an employee will be liable to disciplinary action including dismissal as per the terms and conditions of his service. In such cases, the concerned authority is allowed to dismiss or remove the employee without any inquiry, if it is not reasonably practicable to hold such inquiry.
- All offences punishable under the Act will be cognisable and non-bailable.

Special Protection Group (Amendment) Act, 2019

Presidential Assent: 9 December, 2019

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Home Affairs

The Special Protection Group (Amendment) Act, 2019 amended the Special Protections Group Act, 1988

WELFARE SCHEMES

- **Social Development & Social Justice**
- **Indian Economy**
- **Polity and Governance**
- **Environment**
- **Science & Technology**
- **National Security**

Social Development & Social Justice

This section explores initiatives, policies, and frameworks aimed at reducing inequalities, promoting inclusion, and ensuring every individual has access to essential services, opportunities, and rights, fostering a fair and just community for all.

Health and Sanitation

Mission Utkarsh

Launch Date: February 2024

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Women and Child Development

The Government of India launched Mission Utkarsh to improve nutrition in adolescent girls using Ayurveda.

The project for anaemia control under Mission Utkarsh will be a joint public health initiative by the Ministries of Ayush and Women and Child Development.

Key Features

- The aim of this mission is nutritional improvement of approximately 95,000 adolescent girls in the Anaemia prone districts (where average prevalence of anaemia is approximately 69.5 %).
- Under Mission Utkarsh, 15 central ministries or departments will work to elevate districts at the bottom, to state and national averages.
- In the first phase, the focus will be on improving the anaemic status of adolescent girls (14-18 years) in five aspirational districts of five states namely Assam (Dhubri), Chhattisgarh (Bastar), Jharkhand (Paschimi Singhbhum), Maharashtra (Gadchiroli), and Rajasthan (Dhaulpur).
- This project will cover approximately 10,000 Anganwadi Centres in the five districts.

New Leprosy Treatment Regimen

Notification Date: January 2024

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

The Central government approved a new treatment regimen for leprosy, aiming to stop its transmission at the sub-national level by 2027, three years ahead of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

- This decision, rooted in the latest global scientific research and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), aims to shift from a two-drug regimen to a three-drug regimen for Pauci-Bacillary (PB) leprosy cases.

Objective

- The primary objective is to cease the transmission of leprosy at the sub-national level by 2027, aligning with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, accomplishing this three years ahead of schedule.

Key Features

- **Transition from Two to Three Drugs:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has sanctioned a shift from the current two-drug regimen lasting six months to a three-drug regimen specifically designed for Pauci-Bacillary (PB) cases.
- **Scientific Basis:** This decision is underpinned by the latest globally accepted scientific research studies and evidence-based practices, ensuring a well-informed and effective approach.
- **WHO Endorsement:** The World Health Organization (WHO) has pledged to supply the revised drug regimen starting April 1, 2025, indicating international acknowledgment and support for this strategy.

Initiatives to Tackle Leprosy

- **National Strategic Plan (NSP) & Roadmap for Leprosy (2023-27):** To achieve zero transmission of leprosy by 2027.
- **National Leprosy Eradication Programme:** A centrally sponsored scheme operating under the National Health Mission
- **Nikusth 2.0 Portal:** An integrated portal designed for the comprehensive management of leprosy cases.
- **Sparsh Leprosy Awareness Campaigns:** Introduced in 2017 with the aim of promoting awareness about leprosy, SLACs concentrate on tackling challenges linked to the stigma and discrimination surrounding leprosy.

Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (ABHIM)

Launch Date: October 2021

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

The ABHIM scheme was launched to develop capacities of health systems and institutions at all levels viz. Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.

Indian Economy

This section explores key government schemes in agriculture, commerce, industry, energy, banking, and financial inclusion, aligned with the Union Budget 2024-25's nine priorities. These initiatives aim to foster comprehensive economic growth, resilience and ample opportunities, driving the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

Agriculture & Allied Sectors

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana

Approval Date: February 2024
Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

"Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)" is a Central Sector Sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada for the fisheries sector micro and small enterprises and envisages an investment of over rupees six thousand crore in the next four years.

Objectives

- Gradual formalization of the unorganized fisheries sector through self-registration of fishers, fish farmers and supportive workers under a National Fisheries Sector Digital Platform including creation of work based digital identifies of fish workers for improved service delivery.
- Facilitating access to institutional financing for fisheries sectors' micro and small enterprises.
- Providing one-time incentive to beneficiaries for purchasing aquaculture insurance.
- lncentivizing fisheries and aquaculture microenterprises through performance grants for improving fisheries sector value-chain efficiencies including creation and maintenance of jobs.

Key Features

- It is a Central Sector Sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana.
- **Expenditure:** The Sub-scheme will be implemented at an estimated outlay of Rs.6,000 crore.
  - 50% i.e. Rs.3,000 crore public finance including the World Bank and the AFD external financing,
  - and rest 50% i.e.Rs.3,000 crore being the anticipated investment from the beneficiaries/ private sector leverage.
- **Timeline:** It will be implemented for 4 (four) years from FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 across all the States and UTs.

Intended Beneficiaries

- Fishers, Fish (Aquaculture) Farmers, Fish workers, Fish Vendors or such other person directly engaged in fisheries value chain.
- Micro and Small enterprises in the form of Proprietary Firms, Partnership Firms and Companies registered in India, Societies, Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs), Cooperatives, Federations, Village Level Organizations like Self Help Groups (SHGs), Fish Farmers Producer Organizations (FFPOs) and Startups engaged in fisheries and aquaculture value chains.
- FFPOs also include Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs).
- Any other beneficiaries that may be included by the Department of Fisheries, GoI as targeted beneficiaries.

Components

- **Component 1-A**: Formalization of fisheries sector and facilitating access of fisheries microenterprises to Government of India programs for working capital financing.
  - A National Fisheries Digital Platform (NFDP) will be created and all the stakeholders will be mobilized to register on it.
  - The NFDP will serve multiple functions including disbursement of financial incentives.
- **Component 1-B:** Facilitating adoption of aquaculture insurance.
  - It is proposed to facilitate creation of appropriate insurance product and to cover at least 1 lakh hectare of aquaculture farms during project period to provide the scale of operation.
  - Further, it is proposed to provide onetime incentive to the willing farmers against purchase of insurance with farm size of 4 hectares of water spread area and less.
- **Component 2:** Supporting microenterprises to improve fisheries sector value chain efficiencies:
  - It intends to improve value chain efficiencies in fishery sector through a system of performance grants with associated analytics and awareness campaigns.

Polity & Governance

This section provides insights into various welfare schemes by the Indian government, covering central, state-specific and joint initiatives. It details eligible beneficiaries, benefits, and scheme specifics, highlighting efforts to enhance societal welfare across all levels.

Governance

Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP) and Chakshu

Launch Date: March 2024

Nodal Organisation: Department of Telecommunications (DoT)

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has come out with two initiatives - Chakshu portal, and Digital Intelligence Platform.

While Chakshu enables subscribers to report fraud calls, messages, etc. the Digital Intelligence Platform coordinates and shares information with law enforcement agencies, banks and other financial agencies to act on fraud.

Key Points

- **Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP):** It is developed by the Department of Telecommunications is a secure and integrated platform for real time intelligence sharing, information exchange and coordination among the stakeholders i.e. Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), law enforcement agencies (LEAs), banks and financial institutions (FIs), social media platforms, identity document issuing authorities etc.
  - The portal also contains information regarding the cases detected as misuse of telecom resources. The shared information could be useful to the stakeholders in their respective domains.
  - It also works as backend repository for the citizen-initiated requests on the Sanchar Saathi portal for action by the stakeholders.
  - The DIP is accessible to the stakeholders over secure connectivity and the relevant information is shared based on their respective roles. The said platform is not accessible to citizens.
- **Chakshu (चक्षु) facility on Sanchar Saathi portal:** Chakshu (चक्षु) is the latest addition to the citizen centric facilities already available on the Sanchar Saathi portal of DoT.
  - 'Chakshu' facilitates citizens to report suspected fraud communication received over call, SMS or WhatsApp with the intention of defrauding like KYC expiry or update of bank account / payment wallet / SIM / gas connection / electricity connection, sextortion, impersonation as government official / relative for sending money, disconnection of all mobile numbers by Department of Telecommunications etc.
  - In case, a citizen is already a victim of cyber-crime or financial fraud, it is advised to report at cyber-crime helpline number 1930 or website https://www.cybercrime.gov.in of Government of India.

Digital Time Voucher System for Political Parties

Notification Date: July 2023

Nodal Organisation: Election Commission of India

The Election Commission of India (ECI) implemented a new digital time voucher system to facilitate political parties' access to government-owned electronic media like Doordarshan and All India Radio during election periods.

Key features

- During elections, the ECI mandates that Doordarshan and All India Radio must allocate a certain amount of free airtime to recognized political parties for broadcasting their campaign messages.
- The ECI determines the time slots for political parties based on various factors, including their previous electoral performance and representation in the legislative bodies. Each party is allocated fixed time slots for their broadcasts.
- The digital time voucher system serves as a permission mechanism, offering political parties specific time slots to broadcast or telecast their campaign messages on these media platforms. It streamlines the process and eliminates the need for physical collection of time slots.
- A digital voucher is a type of voucher that is given online and can be redeemed at a later date.

Environment

The following overview details government schemes and policies for environmental conservation, focusing on sustainable development, biodiversity, pollution, waste management, climate change, water resources, and disaster management, highlighting efforts to ensure a sustainable and resilient future.

Sustainable Development

National Efficient Cooking Programme (NECP) and Energy Efficient Fans Programme (EEFP)

Launch Date: November 2023

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Power

Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of Public Sector Undertakings under Ministry of Power, launched its groundbreaking National Efficient Cooking Programme (NECP) and Energy Efficient Fans Programme (EEFP).

National Efficient Cooking Programme (NECP)

- NECP would introduce induction-based cook-stoves across India, offering a cost advantage of 25-30% over traditional cooking methods.
- The objective is to reduce the environmental impact of cooking methods, ensuring cleaner air and improved health for citizens.
- EESL promised energy savings and cost-effective cooking solutions by deploying 20 Lakh Induction cook-stoves in partnership with Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS).

Energy Efficient Fans Programme (EEFP)

- The objective is to reduce electricity consumption and promote the use of energy-saving appliances.
- It would reduce energy usage, environmental impact and enhance consumer comfort while lowering electricity bills.
- The program for deploying one crore ceiling fans was initiated during the G20 Energy Transitions Working Group in Goa, 2023.

Standards & Labelling Programme for Solar PV Modules

Launch Date: October 2023

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Power

The Union government launched the Standards & Labelling Programme for solar PV modules.

- It will make it easier for citizens to make an informed and judicious decision while purchasing and deploying solar photovoltaic modules, known commonly as solar panels.
- The star labelling scheme prepared by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) for PV modules is from January 1, 2024 till December 31, 2025. For this period, there shall be no labelling fee as well.

Key Features

- **Rating**: It involves laying down energy performance norms for appliances/equipment by rating its energy performance on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 star labelled appliances being the most energy efficient one.
- **Appliances Covered**: The program presently covers 34 appliances. 15 appliances are under the mandatory regime which means these appliances cannot be sold in the market without the label and 19 appliances are in voluntary regime where the market is in development stage.
- **Product Differentiation**: It seeks to bring product differentiation to a market where solar products are currently commoditized.

Standards & Labelling Programme

- Launched in 2006, the energy efficiency labeling programs under Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) intends to reduce the energy consumption of appliance without diminishing the services it provides to consumers.
- The scheme is invoked for 34 equipment/appliances including 14 for which it is mandatory.
- This program is expected to save approximately 11.2 billion units of electricity by 2030 and will enable the reduction of CO2 emission close to 9 million tonne by 2030 and shall support India to transition towards low carbon sustainable growth and achieve its ambition of net zero by 2070.

Unnat Takniki Pradarshan Kendra

Launch Date: June 2023

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Power

The Ministry of Power inaugurated a dedicated Centre of Excellence named UTPRERAK (Unnat Takniki Pradarshan Kendra) to accelerate the adoption of energy-efficient technologies in the country's industrial sector.

Science & Technology

This section provides detailed information on scientific education, research and development, and related schemes, and programs in areas such as space, health, biotechnology, and information and communication technology.

Space

Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (YUVIKA)

Launch Date: May 2019

Nodal Organisation: Department of Space

To address this staunch curiosity of young minds, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been organising a special programme for School Children called "Young Scientist Programme" "YUva VIgyani KAryakram" (YUVIKA).

Objective

- The key objective of this initiative is to impart basic knowledge on Space Science, Space Technology and Space Applications to the younger students in emerging trends in space science and technology.

Key Features

- 3 students from each State/ Union Territory are selected to participate in this programme every year covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.
- Those who have finished 8th standard and currently studying in 9th standard are eligible for the programme.
- Chief Secretaries of the respective States/ Administrators of Union Territories in India to arrange for the selection of three students from each of their State/UT and communicate the list to ISRO.
- Students belonging to the rural area have been given special weightage in the selection criteria.

UNispace Nano-satellite Assembly and Training by ISRO (UNNATI)

Launch Date: January 2018

Nodal Organisation: ISRO

India announced a capacity building training programme UNNATI (UNispace Nano-satellite Assembly & Training by ISRO) on Nano-satellites development through a combination of theoretical coursework and hands-on training on Assembly, Integration and Testing (AIT) during the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful uses of Outer space.

- The first batch of the above programme began on January 15th, 2019. 30 participants from 17 countries were chosen for the first batch of the UNNATI programme.
- The Programme provides opportunities to the participants from developing countries to strengthen their capabilities in assembling, integrating and testing of nanosatellites.

Innovation of Science Pursuit for Inspire Research (INSPIRE)

Launch Date: December 2008

Nodal Organisation: Department of Science & Technology

Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) is an innovative programme sponsored and managed by the Department of Science & Technology for attraction of talent to Science.

Objective

- The basic objective of INSPIRE is to communicate to the youth of the country the excitements of creative pursuit of science, attract talent to the study of science at an early age and thus build the required critical human resource pool for strengthening and expanding the Science & Technology system and R&D base.

Key Feature

- A striking feature of the programme is that it does not believe in conducting competitive exams for identification of talent at any level.
- It believes in and relies on the efficacy of the existing educational structure for identification of talent.

INSPIRE has three components:

1. Scheme for Early Attraction of Talent (SEATS)
2. Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE)
3. Assured Opportunity for Research Careers (AORC)

Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana (KVPY)

- The aim of the program is to identify and encourage talented students with aptitude for research and encourage students of Basic Sciences, Engineering and Medicine to take up research careers in these areas.
- From the year 2022, Department of Science and Technology has decided to subsume KVPY with INSPIRE.

National Security

This segment covers national security's economic, political, and diplomatic dimensions, detailing government schemes and initiatives on defence developments and cyber security, highlighting efforts to strengthen and safeguard the nation's security infrastructure.

Defence Related Developments

Defence Testing Infrastructure (DTI) Scheme

Launch Date: May 2020
Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Defence

In order to boost domestic defence and aerospace manufacturing, Ministry of Defence (MoD) has launched Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS) with an outlay of Rs 400 crore for creating state-of-the-art testing infrastructure in partnership with the private industry.

Rationale

India lacks easily accessible state-of-the-art testing infrastructure and through this scheme, the same can be achieved

The Scheme would provide financial assistance to the private sector for setting up Testing and Certification facilities for manufacturers of defence equipment/ systems

Key Features

The Scheme would run for the duration of five years. It envisages setting up 6-8 new test facilities in partnership with private industry. This will facilitate indigenous defence production, consequently reduce imports of military equipment and help make the country self-reliant.

Each DTI will be setup through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) which will be the Implementation Agency.

Only private entities registered in India and State Government agencies will qualify for forming the SPV.

The SPVs under the Scheme will be registered under Companies Act 2013. The SPV shall also operate and maintain all assets under the Scheme, in a self-sustainable manner by collecting user charges.

Funding: The projects under the Scheme will be provided with up to 75% government funding in the form of 'Grant-in-Aid'. The remaining 25% of the project cost will have to be borne by the SPV.

The equipment/systems tested will be certified as per appropriate accreditation.

While majority of test facilities are expected to come up in the two Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs), the Scheme is not limited to setting up Test Facilities in the DICs only.

Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme

The SRE scheme provides for capacity building of the States through provisions of ex-gratia to the family of civilian/security forces killed in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) violence, training and operational needs of security forces, rehabilitation of surrendered LWE cadre, community policing, compensation for property damage by LWEs etc.

- Impact of initiatives, including the SRE scheme, taken by the MHA to address LWE menace has resulted in consistent decline in LWE violence and reduction in its geographical spread.
- Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts covered under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme reduced from 126 to 90 in April 2018 and further to 70 in July 2021.

Cyber Security

NIA's Own Database of Terrorists

Launch Date: January 2024
Nodal Organisation: National Investigation Agency (NIA)

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has developed the National Terrorism Data Fusion & Analysis Centre (NTDFAC), which makes the government collect and compile information on terrorists and their associates from various sources.

The National Terrorism Data Fusion & Analysis Centre (NTDFAC) is modelled along the lines of the Global Terrorism Database of the US.

STATE-SPECIFIC WELFARE SCHEMES & PUBLIC POLICIES

State-specific Welfare Schemes & Public Policies

This section sheds light on select public policies and welfare schemes of some major States and Union Territories.

Andhra Pradesh

Village Volunteers System

The 'Village Volunteers System' was launched in August 2019 in order to provide government services at the people's doorsteps through volunteers.

Key Points

- Basic idea behind implementing this scheme was to infuse confidence among people in government.
- Village secretariats would be set up in each village to deliver government services to people in 72 hours. These village secretariats would also be launched from 2 October by making volunteers a bridge between government and people of state.
- **Volunteers:** The scheme will involve more than 2.8 lakh volunteers. Under it, 1 volunteer will cover 50 families in each village. Identity cards will be given to each volunteer and they would get an allowance of Rs.5000 per month.
- **Eligibility**
  - Applicant must be a resident of Andhra Pradesh.
  - Applicant should belong to the panchayat where he/she wants to be a volunteer.
  - Applicant must have passed degree in urban areas, inter in rural areas and 10th class or equivalent in tribal areas.
  - Applicant must be between 18-35 years.

Jagananna Amma Vodi Scheme

Government of Andhra Pradesh launched the 'Jagananna Amma Vodi' scheme in the 2020-21 academic year.

Aim

- The scheme aims to provide financial assistance to approximately 42 lakh mothers, offering them an annual gift of Rs. 15,000 for sending their children to school.

Key Features

- Through the Amma Vodi scheme, approximately 83 lakh students from Class I to intermediate levels will benefit from the financial assistance provided by the state government.
- By directly supporting mothers, the scheme recognizes their critical role in shaping the educational journey of their children.
- By extending financial assistance to mothers, the government aims to alleviate any financial burdens associated with their children's education, encouraging them to send their wards to schools.

YSR Yantra Seva Pathakam

The YSR Yantra Seva Pathakam Scheme was launched in 2021 to overcome the shortage of agricultural machinery.

Key Points

- Through this scheme, the government will provide necessary machinery and equipment to the farmers on a rental basis through community recruitment centres.
- The government has set up around 10750 community recruitment centres. In each Mandal of East - and West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts 1,035 cluster level CHCs (community hiring centres) with harvesters will be set up at the rate of 5 units.
- This scheme is going to improve the financial condition of the farmers.

Jagananna Vasathi Deevena Scheme

The government of Andhra Pradesh (AP) launched the Jagananna Vasathi Deevena scheme for helping the Below Poverty Line (BPL) students financially.

Key Points

- The BPL students who are good in studies but are unable to pursue courses that have a high fee are provided financial assistance under this scheme.
- The Jagananna Vasathi Deevena scheme provides scholarships for all eligible candidates. This scheme provides scholarships to the poverty line category of students as the AP government wants to help these students to study their desired courses without having to do any part-time jobs or errands to pay fees.
- The aim of providing scholarships is to help students continue their education and become successful individuals in the future.
- It also aims at improving the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER), ensuring the continuation of students in