PIB SUMMARY - JUNE 2020

Institutes of Eminence Scheme

Union HRD Minister has recently chaired a review meeting on the progress of works sanctioned under the Institutes of Eminence Scheme (IoE).

About Institutes of Eminence Scheme -
- Institutes of Eminence are institutions which are expected to make into top 500 world rankings in a decade.
- They have **complete freedom to decide the curricula, hire domestic and foreign faculty and fix a fee structure** of their choice.
- It comprises **10 public and 10 private educational institutions** which will be selected based on the recommendations of Empowered committee.
- The Government has recently shortlisted 6 Institutions of Eminence (IoEs) including 3 from Public Sector and 3 from Private Sector.
- **Rs. 1000 cr. grant will be given only to public institutions and no funds will be given to private institutions**.
- These Institutions shall also be provided with autonomy
  - to admit foreign students up to 30% of admitted students;
  - to recruit foreign faculty upto 25% of faculty strength;
  - to offer online courses upto 20% of its programmes;
  - to enter into academic collaboration with top 500 in the world ranking Institutions without permission of UGC;
  - free to fix and charge fees from foreign students without restriction;
  - flexibility of course structure in terms of number of credit hours and years to take a degree;
  - complete flexibility in fixing of curriculum and syllabus, among others.

Periodic Labour Force Survey

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is an initiative aimed at generating estimates of various labour force indicators. **The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation conducts the survey.**
Quarterly survey (For urban areas only) captures only the current weekly status (CWS) data. Annual survey (For both rural and urban areas) measures both the usual status and CWS. The survey was launched in 2017 and the first annual report was released (July 2017-June 2018), covering both rural and urban areas, in May 2019.

Key definitions -
- Key employment and unemployment Indicators covered included **Labour Force Participation Rates (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR), and Unemployment Rate (UR)**.
- LFPR is defined as the percentage of persons in labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.
- WPR is the percentage of employed persons in the population.
- UR is the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.

Findings of the PLFS 2018-19 -
- India's unemployment rate improved from the 45-year high of 6.1% in 2017-18 to 5.8% in 2018-19.
- The labour force participation rate also improved marginally, from 36.9% in 2017-18 to 37.5% in 2018-19. The report shows the dip came across all categories, though women and rural workers showed the most improvement.
- Women's unemployment fell from 5.7% to 5.2%, while male unemployment only fell from 6.2% to 6%.
- Urban unemployment was still at a high of 7.7% in 2018-19, a marginal drop from 7.8% in 201718, while rural unemployment fell from 5.3% to 5%.

Conclusion -
It seems policies meant to gain from demographic dividend have not worked well, as data shows UR among youth (15-29 years) is as high as 17.3 per cent, though lower than 17.8 per cent during previous year. Rate is much higher in urban areas where nearly 1 out of every five youth is unemployed. Also, among urban female, one out of every four is out of job.

India Rankings 2020

Union Ministry of Human Resource Development has released "India Rankings 2020" of Institutions of Higher Education in various categories on the basis of their performance on five broad categories of parameters.

This is the fifth consecutive edition of India Rankings of the institutions of higher education in India. In 2020, an addition to nine rankings ie one domain "Dental" has been introduced for the first time bringing the total tally to 10 categories / subject domains.

Details -
• The ranking framework evaluates institutions on five broad generic groups of parameters, i.e. *Teaching, Learning and Resources (TLR)*, *Research and Professional Practice (RP)*, *Graduation Outcomes (GO)*, *Outreach and Inclusivity (OI)* and *Perception (PR)*. Ranks are assigned based on total sum of marks assigned for each of these five broad groups of parameters.
• As a matter of practice, 200 institutions are ranked in engineering discipline, 100 institutions are ranked in Overall, University and College categories, 75 each in Management and Pharmacy, 40 in Medical and 20 each in Architecture and Law and 30 institutions are ranked in Dental for the first time. Additional rankings in suitably bunched forms are also being provided.
• In the **overall** category, IIT Madras tops the list, followed by IISc Bengaluru, IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay etc.
• IISc Bengaluru has been ranked as the top **university** in India, with second place occupied by JNU, New Delhi.
• In the **management** category, IIM Ahmedabad tops the list, followed by IIM Bangalore and IIM Calcutta in the second and third position.
• In the **medical** category, AIIMS, New Delhi tops the list, followed by PGI Chandigarh.
• In the newly introduced '**dental**' category, 'Maulana Azad Institute of Dental Sciences, Delhi' has topped the list.

National Institutional Ranking Framework -
• The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) **was launched by the Minister of Human Resource Development on 29th September 2015.**
• This framework **outlines a methodology to rank institutions across the country.**
• The parameters broadly cover **- Teaching, Learning and Resources, Research and Professional Practices, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity and Perception.**
• NIRF rankings 2019 has been given under 9 categories**: Overall, Universities, Engineering, Medical, Management, Law, Architecture, Pharmacy, Colleges and Dental.** Till 2019, the rankings were made under 8 categories. In 2020, the ninth category of 'dental' was added in the list.

iCommit initiative

Ministry of Power has launched the '#iCommit' campaign, on the occasion of World Environment Day as a clarion call to all stakeholders and individuals to continue moving towards energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability to create a robust and resilient energy system in the future.

Details -
• The '#iCommit' initiative, driven by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), under the administration of Ministry of Power, Government of India is uniting a diverse set of players such

as Governments, Corporates, Multilateral and Bilateral Organisations, Think Tanks and Individuals.

- The '#iCommit' initiative is centred around the idea of building an energy resilient future. The pre-requisite for that goal is to create a flexible and agile power system. A healthy power sector can help the nation in meeting the objective of energy access and security for all.

Asiatic Lion

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has expressed his happiness over the increasing population of the Majestic Asiatic Lion, living in Gujarat's Gir Forest. It has been recently reported that the population of the Majestic Lion, living in Gujarat's Gir Forest, is up by almost 29%.

About Asiatic Lions -
- Asiatic Lion is also called Panthera Leo Leo in India.
- It is restricted to the Gir Forests of Gujarat.
- On the IUCN Red List, it is listed under its former scientific name Panthera leo persica as Endangered because of its small population size and area of occupancy.
- Until the 19th century, it occurred in Saudi Arabia eastern Turkey, Iran, Mesopotamia, and from east of the Indus River to Bengal and Narmada River in Central India.
- The population of Asiatic lion has steadily increased since 2010.

Asiatic Lion Conservation Project -
- The MoEFCC had launched the "*Asiatic Lion Conservation Project*" in 2019 with an aim to protect and conserve the world's last ranging free population of Asiatic Lion and its associated ecosystem.
- The project is funded from the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme- Development of Wildlife Habitat (CSS-DWH)** with the contributing ratio being 60:40 of Central and State share.
- Key aspects of the conservation project include undertaking "habitat improvement" measures, making more sources of water available, creating a wildlife crime cell, and a task force for the Greater Gir region.
- It would also involve having in place a GPS-based tracking system, which would look at surveillance tracking, animal and vehicle tracking.
- There would also be an automated sensor grid that would have magnetic sensors, movement sensors and infra-red heat sensors.

About Gir National Park -
- The Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Junagadh district of **Gujarat.**
- The Gir Forests is the only natural habitat of Asiatic lions. It was declared as a sanctuary in 1965 and a national park in 1975.
- The Gir Forests is the largest compact tract of **dry deciduous forests** in the semi-arid western part of India.
- The Gir Forests forms a unique habitat for many mammals, reptiles, birds and insect species along with a rich variety of flora.
- Gir is often linked with **"Maldharis"** who have survived through the ages by having symbiotic relationship with the lion.

Indian Chamber of Commerce

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address of the 95th annual plenary session of the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) through video conferencing.
During the address, he outlined his vision for self-reliant India, the recent decision to amend the APMC Act, promotion of North East as a hub for Organic Farming, people centric governance and development and the digital India initiatives taken by the Government of India.

About Indian Chamber of Commerce -
- The Indian Chamber of Commerce, or ICC as it is popularly known, is the premier body of business and industry in **Eastern and North-Eastern India.**

- The membership of the Chamber comprises several of the largest corporate groups in the country, with business operations all over the country and abroad.
- Founded in 1925, Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is **the leading and only National Chamber of Commerce having headquarter in Kolkata**, and one of the most pro-active and forward-looking Chambers in the country today. It is headquartered in Kolkata, over the last few years but it has truly emerged as a national Chamber of repute, with full-fledged State Offices in **New Delhi, Mumbai, Guwahati, Bhubaneshwar, Hyderabad, Agartala, Siliguri and Ranchi.**
- Its membership spans some of the most prominent and major industrial groups in India.
- ICC's forte is its ability to anticipate the needs of the future, respond to challenges, and prepare the stakeholders in the economy to benefit from these changes and opportunities.
- Set up by a group of pioneering industrialists led by **Mr G D Birla,** the Indian Chamber of Commerce was closely associated with the Indian Freedom Movement, as the **first organised voice of indigenous Indian Industry**.
- Several of the distinguished industry leaders in India, such as **Mr B M Birla, Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Sir Badridas Goenka, Mr S P Jain, Lala Karamchand Thapar, Mr Russi Mody, Mr Ashok Jain,** have led the ICC as its President.

ARPIT

The Indian Air Force has designed, developed and inducted an **Airborne Rescue Pod for Isolated Transportation (ARPIT)**. This pod will be utilised for evacuation of critical patients with infectious diseases including COVID-19 from high altitude area, isolated and remote places.

Why?
Requirement of an air evacuation system with facility to prevent spread of infectious aerosol from a COVID19 patient during air travel was felt by IAF when COVID19 was declared as a pandemic.

Details about ARPIT -
- The system has been developed as **a lightweight isolation system** made from aviation certified material.
- It has **a transparent and durable cast Perspex** for enhanced patient visibility which is larger, higher and wider than the existing models.
- The isolation system **caters for suitable number of air exchanges**, integration of medical monitoring instruments, and **ventilation to an intubated patient**.
- In addition, it **generates high constant negative pressure** in the isolation chamber **for prevention of infection risk to aircrew, ground crew and health care workers** involved in air transportation.
- The ARPIT utilises High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) H-13 class filters and **supports invasive ventilation using Transport Ventilator**.
- The design **integrates life support and monitoring instruments** (defibrillator with multipara monitor, pulse oximeter, Infusion pumps etc), long arm gloves for use by health care professionals and power pack with high endurance.
- Design requirements have been evolved and are based on the guidelines issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) and Centre for Disease Control (CDC), USA

Sahakar Mitra

Sahakar Mitra: Scheme on Internship Programme (SIP) was launched recently by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

What is Sahakar Mitra scheme?
- In the series of initiatives by National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), the new scheme called Sahakar Mitra: Scheme on Internship Programme (SIP) **will provide the young professionals an opportunity of practical exposure and learning from the working of NCDC and cooperatives as a paid intern**.

- Sahakar Mitra would also **provide an opportunity to professionals from academic institutions to develop leadership and entrepreneurial roles through cooperatives as Farmers Producers Organisations (FPO)**.
- Sahakar Mitra scheme is expected to **assist cooperative institutions access new and innovative ideas of young professionals** while the interns gain experience of working in the field giving confidence to be self-reliant. It is expected to be a win-win situation both for cooperatives as well as for the young professionals.
- Under the scheme, **professional graduates in disciplines such as Agriculture and allied areas, IT etc. will be eligible for internship**. Professionals who are pursuing or have completed their MBA degrees in Agri-business, Cooperation, Finance, International Trade, Forestry, Rural Development, Project Management etc. will also be eligible.
- NCDC has earmarked funds for Sahakar Mitra paid internship program under which each intern will get financial support over a 4 months internship period.

About NCDC -
- The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) is **a statutory Corporation set up under an Act of Indian Parliament on 13 March 1963**.
- The objectives of NCDC are **planning and promoting programmes for production, processing, marketing, storage, export and import of agricultural produce, foodstuffs, industrial goods, livestock and certain other notified commodities and services on cooperative principles** and for matters concerned therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Functions** - Planning, promoting and financing programmes for supply of consumer goods and collection, processing, marketing, storage and export of **minor forest produce through cooperatives**, besides income generating stream of activities such as poultry, dairy, fishery, sericulture, handloom etc.
- NCDC will now be able to **finance projects in the rural industrial cooperative sectors and for certain notified services in rural areas** like water conservation, irrigation and micro irrigation, agri-insurance, agro-credit, rural sanitation, animal health, etc.

Aarogyapath

Aarogyapath is a CSIR-led National Healthcare Supply Chain Portal that aims to provide real-time availability of critical healthcare supplies has been launched recently.

Need -
- During the present national health emergency arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic, where in there is severe disruption in supply chain, the ability to produce and deliver the critical items may be compromised due to a variety of reasons.
- The **information platform** named *AarogyaPath* with a vision of "*providing a path which leads one on a journey towards Aarogya (healthy life)"* was developed to address these challenges.
- AarogyaPath would serve manufacturers, suppliers and customers.

Significance -
- This integrated public platform that **provides single-point availability of key healthcare goods** can be helpful to customers in tackling a number of routinely experienced issues. These issues include dependence on limited suppliers, time-consuming processes to identify good quality products, limited access to suppliers who can supply standardised products at reasonable prices within desired timelines, lack of awareness about the latest product launches, etc.
- It also **helps manufacturers and suppliers to reach a wide network of customers** efficiently, overcoming gaps in connectivity between them and potential demand centres like nearby pathological laboratories, medical stores, hospitals, etc.
- It will also **create opportunities for business expansion** due to an expanded slate of buyers and visibility of new requirements for products. Over time, analytics from this platform is expected to generate early signals to manufacturers on over capacity as well as on looming shortages. This would help to reduce wastage of resources due to inefficient forecasting and excess manufacturing, generate awareness about the demand for new technologies.

Draft Electricity Amendment Bill, 2020

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to the Chief Ministers of the States ruled by the opposition parties over the draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

What is the issue?
She has called the draft Bill a violation of the 'spirit of cooperative federalism' and accused the Centre of failure to consult the states on the Bill since Electricity is on the Concurrent List.

What are the contentious provisions?
- One of the sweeping changes proposed in the Bill is an end to subsidies. All consumers, including farmers, will have to pay the tariff, and the subsidy will be sent to them through direct benefit transfer.
- The draft "divests" the States of their power to fix tariff and hands over the task to a Central government-appointed authority. It is considered discriminatory, since the tariff can be tweaked according to the whims and fancies of the Central government.
- The bill is also criticised for the provision that makes it compulsory for the State power companies to buy a minimum percentage of renewable energy fixed by the Centre. It is said that this would be detrimental to the cash-strapped power firms.

Changes proposed in the 'Draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020 -
- **Renewable Energy** - This Amendment seeks to promote a legal and administrative eco-system which harbours special attention to renewable energy. The said policy may also prescribe minimum percentage of purchase of electricity from renewable sources of production.
- **Cross Border Trade** - The Central Government has been delegated with the power to prescribe rules and guidelines to allow and facilitate cross border trade of electricity.
- **Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority** - The Amendment has inserted a new chapter in the Act which prescribes the creation and functioning of the Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority ("Authority"). This Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority has been proposed to be given sole jurisdiction to adjudicate upon matters on performance of obligations under a contract regarding sale, purchase and transmission of electricity, which exclusion of this specialised authority's jurisdiction on determination of tariff or any other dispute regarding tariff.
- **Payment Security** - Lack of payment security mechanism has created a large pool of unpaid dues. To disrupt any future trickle down of such unrealised revenues, this Amendment proposes a mechanism wherein "no electricity shall be scheduled or despatched under such contract unless adequate security of payment as agreed upon by the parties to the contract, has been provided".
- **Grant of subsidy** - The benefit of subsidy to be granted directly to the consumer and the licensee shall charge the consumers as per the tariff determined by the Appropriate Commission. The determination of tariffs shall be fixed by the commission without accounting for subsidies. Further, basis the tariff policies, surcharges and cross subsidies shall be progressively reduced.
- **Time limit for adoption of tariff so determined** - There had been the issue of lazy attempts from the commissions in adopting the tariffs determined, causing issues of cost escalation. To address this problem, the Amendment has prescribed a period of 60 days to adopt the determined tariffs.
- **Inclusion of distribution sub-licensee and franchisee** - To ease the burden of distribution licensees and in order to promote some form of demographic specialisation, the distribution licensees, can appoint another entity for distribution of electricity on its behalf, within its area of supply.
- **Enhancement of the powers of the Appellate Tribunal of Electricity -** APTEL is proposed to have the powers of a High Court to deal with wilful disobedience of persons and entities under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971. Additionally, any person can appeal the decisions of the Authority which is introduced by this Amendment in front of the APTEL. The numbers of members at the APTEL have also been proposed to be increased by the Amendment.
- **Applicable to the whole of India -** The Act shall now be applicable to the territory which was erstwhile exempted from the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Indian Gas Exchange

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has launched the Indian Gas Exchange (IGX), first nationwide online delivery-based gas trading platform.

What is IGX?
- IGX will be a delivery-based trading platform for delivery of Natural Gas.
- Incorporated as **a wholly owned subsidiary of the IEX - India's energy market platform**, IGX will enable market participants to trade in standardised gas contracts.
- The platform is **fully automated with web-based interface** to provide seamless trading experience to the customers.
- Imported Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) will be regassified and sold to buyers through the exchange, removing the requirement for buyers and sellers to find each other.
- This will mean that buyers do not have to contact multiple dealers to ensure they find a fair price.
- The exchange also allows much shorter contracts – **for delivery on the next day, and up to a month** – while ordinarily contracts for natural gas supply are as long as six months to a year. This, experts say, will allow buyers and sellers greater flexibility.

Benefits -
- As there will be a market driven pricing mechanism, India Gas Exchange (IGX) will play a bigger role towards realising a free market for gas.
- The IGX is a digital trading platform that will allow buyers and sellers of natural gas to trade both in the spot market and in the forward market for imported natural gas across three hubs —Dahej and Hazira in Gujarat, and Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh.
- The new electronic trading platform completes the entire energy value chain from gas production from multiple sources and imports of LNG from different parts of globe to having a transparent price mechanism.

Way forward -
- An independent system operator for natural gas pipelines would help ensure transparent allocation of pipeline usage, and build confidence in the minds of buyers and sellers about neutrality in the allocation of pipeline capacity.
- Experts have also called for natural gas to be included in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime to avoid buyers having to deal with different levies such as VAT across states, when purchasing natural gas from the exchange.

Composite Regional Centres for Persons with Disabilities

Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has recently inaugurated the 'Composite Regional Centre (CRC) for Skill Development, Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities' in Ranchi.

About CRCs -
- CRCs have been established in many other States and they all are working for skill development, rehabilitation and providing employment to the Persons with Disabilities. The goal is to establish CRCs in every state.
- The primary objective of CRC is to create the requisite infrastructure for training, manpower development, research and to provide services to persons with disabilities.

Objectives -
The main objectives are:
- To serve as the Composite Regional Centre for rehabilitation and special education of persons with disabilities.
- To establish linkages with existing medical, educational, and employment services following the principles of community-based rehabilitation, and offer extension services in the rural areas.
- To stimulate growth of services by encouraging and supporting voluntary organisations, parent groups and self- help groups.

- To undertake human resource development by training rehabilitation professionals, village level workers, multi-rehabilitation workers and other functionaries in the government and non-government sector required for providing services to persons with disabilities.
- To develop strategies for delivery of rehabilitation services suitable to the socio-cultural background of the region.
- To undertake research and development with specific reference to the needs of diverse groups of people with disability, keeping in view the nature and severity of disability in the region.
- To undertake public education programme for the creation of awareness among parents and the community.
- To undertake designing, fabrication & fitment of aids and appliances.
- To undertake services of education and skill development, leading to enhancement of opportunities for employment, rehabilitation, mobility, communication, recreation and integration in society.

About ADIP Scheme -
- The ADIP Scheme (Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances) is in operation since 1981 with the **main objective to assist the needy disabled persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances** that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhance their economic potential.
- Assistive devices are **given to PwDs with an aim to improve their independent functioning and to arrest the extent of disability and occurrence of secondary disability**. The aids and appliances supplied under the Scheme must have due certification.
- The scheme also **envisages conduct of corrective surgeries, wherever required, before providing an assistive device**.
- Under the Scheme, **grants-in-aid are released to various implementing agencies** (Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)/National Institutes/Composite Regional Centres/District Disability Rehabilitation Centres/ State Handicapped Development Corporations/ NGOs, etc.) **for purchase and distribution of aids and assistive devices**.
- The Scheme was last revised w.e.f. 1.4.2014 and further modified and approved for continuation during the remaining period of the 14th Finance Commission i.e., up to 31.3.2020.

IFLOWS Mumbai

Maharashtra's Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare has launched an Integrated Flood Warning System called 'INFLOWS-Mumbai' recently.

What is it?
- IFLOWS is **a monitoring and flood warning system** that will be able to relay alerts of possible flood-prone areas anywhere between six to 72 hours in advance.
- The system can **provide all information regarding possible flood-prone areas**, likely height the floodwater could attain, location-wise problem areas across all 24 wards and calculate the vulnerability and risk of elements exposed to flood.

How will it work?
- The **primary source for the system is the amount of rainfall**, but with Mumbai being a coastal city, the system also factors in tidal waves and storm tides for its flood assessments.
- In the last two years, **researchers have been conducting studies to provide real-time weather information** by measuring the city's rainfall, how much water drained out, topography, land use, infrastructure development, population, lakes, creeks and data on river bathymetry of all rivers namely Mithi, Dahisar, Oshiwara, Poisar and Ulhas.
- The system has **provisions to capture the urban drainage** within the city and predict the areas of flooding. The system comprises seven modules- Data Assimilation, Flood, Inundation, Vulnerability, Risk, Dissemination Module and Decision Support System.
- The system has **provisions to capture the urban drainage within the city and predict the areas of flooding**.

How will it be beneficial for Mumbai?

- **Based on the amount of rain recorded, time, location, topography and forecast**, the system is designed to generate flood warnings for specific geographical areas of the city. All this information will then be routed to authorities.
- The early warning **forecast would include alerts on rainfall information, tide levels, storm surge for low-lying areas** anticipated to be affected, thereby minimising the damage from cyclones and heavy rain events in Mumbai by evacuating people to safe areas.
- The system, initially only to be accessed by the civic body will **enable them to issue alerts for citizens who can then avoid such zones**.

How it came into being?
- In a bid to aid in the mitigation of the flood prone city, Disaster Management Department of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) approached the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) to develop an Integrated Flood Warning System for Mumbai, on the lines of a similar system developed for Chennai earlier.
- MoES initiated the development of the flood warning system in July 2019 using the expertise of Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), in close coordination with Disaster Management Department of MCGM.

Amoebiasis

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), *Entamoeba histolytica* is the **third-leading cause of morbidity and mortality due to parasitic disease in humans**. It causes amoebiasis or amoebic dysentery, which is highly prevalent in developing countries.

How does it infect human body?
- This protozoan is **anaerobic** or micro-aerophilic in nature such that it **cannot survive high concentrations of oxygen**.
- However, during infection, **it faces a high surge of oxygen inside the human body**.
- The organism **synthesises large amounts of cysteine to counter oxidative stress**.
- This pathogen deploys cysteine as one of the essential molecules in its defence mechanism against high oxygen levels. Entamoeba expresses two crucial enzymes for synthesising cysteine.

Research -
- Researchers from JNU has characterised and determined the molecular structures of both these crucial enzymes.
- They have also successfully screened for potent inhibitors for one of the enzymes, O-acetyl L-serine sulfhydrylase (OASS).
- Some of these inhibitors can check the growth of this organism with high efficacy.
- Cysteine biosynthesis is crucial for the survival of *E. histolytica* and may be similar protozoan parasites. These can be targeted by inhibiting their pathways, which the researchers have successfully done. The identified molecules can be lead to the development of drug molecules

About amoebiasis -
- Amoebiasis is **a parasitic infection of the colon** with the amoeba Entamoeba histolytica.
- Amoebiasis infection is most common in tropical areas with untreated water. It spreads through drinking or eating uncooked food, such as fruit, that may have been washed in contaminated local water.
- If symptoms occur, they may be mild and include cramping and diarrhoea. Bloody stools, fever and, rarely, liver abscess may occur in severe cases.
- Treatment includes **antibiotics**.

Rapid Antigen testing

The Delhi government has commenced COVID-19 testing through the rapid antigen methodology at 169 centres in and around containment zones of the city.

<u>**What is 'Rapid Antigen testing'?**</u>
- A rapid antigen detection test (RADT), also known as the rapid streptococcal test, **detects the fragments of proteins found on or within the virus by testing samples collected from the nasal cavity using swabs**.
- One of the main advantages of an antigen test is the speed of the test, which can provide results in minutes. However, **antigen tests may not detect all active infections**, as they do not work the same way as a PCR test.
- Antigen tests are very specific for the virus, but are not as sensitive as molecular PCR tests. This means that **positive results from antigen tests are highly accurate, but there is a higher chance of false negatives**, so negative results do not rule out infection.
- With this in mind, **negative results from an antigen test may need to be confirmed with a PCR test prior** to making treatment decisions or to prevent the possible spread of the virus due to a false negative.
- Like RT-PCR, the **rapid antigen detection test too seeks to detect the virus rather than the antibodies produced by the body**.

<u>Chikungunya</u>

Studying the geographic distribution and evolution of the chikungunya virus over the period from 2005-2018, a team from ICMR-National Institute of Virology, Pune, has noted India as an endemic reservoir for the virus with persistent global transmissions from the country.

<u>**What does the study say?**</u>
- The paper published recently in Infection, Genetics and Evolution adds that "dispersal of the strains from India was noted to neighbouring and distant countries" such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and China.
- The Indian Ocean lineage is a subgroup within the East Central South African genotype. It was responsible for the resurgence in the epidemic on La Reunion island and other neighbouring islands in the Indian Ocean and in the Indian sub-continent during 2004-2005.

<u>**About Chikungunya -**</u>
- Chikungunya is **a viral disease** transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes. It causes fever and severe joint pain. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash.
- Joint pain is often debilitating and can vary in duration.
- The disease shares some clinical signs with dengue and zika, and can be misdiagnosed in areas where they are common. The virus is transmitted from human to human by the bites of infected female mosquitoes. Most commonly, the mosquitoes involved are *Aedes aegypti* **and** *Aedes albopictus*, two species which can also transmit other mosquito-borne viruses, including dengue.
- There is **no cure for the disease**. Treatment is focused on relieving the symptoms.
- The proximity of mosquito breeding sites to human habitation is a significant risk factor for chikungunya.
- The disease mostly occurs in Africa, Asia and the Indian subcontinent. However a major outbreak in 2015 affected several countries of the Region of the Americas.

<u>Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence</u>

India has recently joined the leading economies including USA, UK, EU, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore to launch the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (AI).

<u>**What is GPAI?**</u>
- GPAI is **an international and multi-stakeholder initiative to guide the responsible development and use of AI**, grounded in **human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation, and economic growth**.

- This is also a **first initiative of its type for evolving better understanding of the challenges and opportunities around AI** using the experience and diversity of participating countries. In order to achieve this goal, the initiative will look to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
- In collaboration with partners and international organisations, **GPAI will bring together leading experts from industry, civil society, governments, and academia to collaborate to promote responsible evolution of AI** and will also evolve methodologies to show how AI can be leveraged to better respond to the present global crisis around COVID-19.

India and AI -
- It is pertinent to note that **India has recently launched National AI Strategy and National AI Portal and have also started leveraging AI across various sectors such as education, agriculture, healthcare, e-commerce, finance, telecommunications, etc. with inclusion and empowerment of human being approach** by supplementing growth and development. By joining GPAI as a founding member, India will actively participate in the global development of Artificial Intelligence, leveraging upon its experience around use of digital technologies for inclusive growth.
- GPAI will be supported by a **Secretariat, to be hosted by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** in Paris, as well as by two Centres of Expertise- one each in Montreal and Paris.

Naval Liaisons at RMIFC and EMASOH

After joining the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) as Observer in March, India is looking to post Navy Liaison Officers at the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and also at the European maritime surveillance initiative in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH) for improved Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

What is RMFIC?
The RMFIC functions under the aegis of the IOC, of which India became an Observer in March 2020 along with Japan and the United Nations.

What is EMASOH?
The EMASOH headquarters is composed of Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and French officers and based at the French naval base in Abu Dhabi. The aim is "to monitor maritime activity and guarantee freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

Indian Ocean Commission -
- Founded in 1982, the IOC is an intergovernmental organisation comprising five small-island states in the Western Indian Ocean: the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion (a French department), and Seychelles.
- It was institutionalised in 1984 by the Victoria Agreement in Seychelles.
- Over the years, the IOC has emerged as an active and trusted regional actor, working in and for the Western Indian Ocean and implementing a range of projects.
- The IOC granted observer status to India on March 6 at the Commission's 34th Council of Ministers.

India's engagement with IOC -
- More recently, the IOC has demonstrated leadership in the maritime security domain. Since maritime security is a prominent feature of India's relations with Indian Ocean littoral states, India's interest in the IOC should be understood in this context.
- India has preferred to engage bilaterally with smaller states in the region. What India will not find in the IOC is a cluster of small states seeking a 'big brother' partnership.

Raja Parba festival

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has greeted the people of Odisha on the special festival of Raja Parba.

What is 'Raja Parba' festival?

- Raja Parba is a three-day-long festival **dedicated to Mother Earth (Bhuma Devi)** and womanhood at large. The festivities begin a day before Mithuna Sankranti and conclude two days after that.
- The **first day** of the festival is called **Pahili Raja**, the **second** is **Mithuna Sankranti** and the **third Bhu daha or Basi Raja**. The preparation begins one day before Pahili Raja, and it is called **Sajabaja**.
- Primarily, it is **a time for the unmarried girls to prepare for their matrimony**. They follow various customs related to the festival by consuming nutritious food like Podapitha, not walking barefoot, taking a bath on the first day, and merrily swinging on ropes attached to a tree.

How is it celebrated?

- During the Parba, Odia people do no undertake any construction works or tilling that requires the earth to be dug. And by not doing such activities, they pay ode to the Mother Earth who needs a break from routine work.
- The festival concludes with a custom called *Vasumati Snana* or the **bathing of Bhuma Devi**. Women worship a stone that symbolises the Mother Earth. They give her a bath with turmeric paste and offer her flowers and smear her with Sindoor.
- This festival is also associated with the end of the summer season and the arrival of the monsoon. And therefore, it is also associated with agriculture and cultivation related communities and activities.

eBloodServices

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare has launched the 'eBloodServices' mobile app developed by the Indian Red Cross Society. The Union Health Minister is also the Chairman of Indian Red Cross Society.

How does it work?

- Through this App, four units of blood can be requisitioned at a time and the blood bank will wait for as long as 12 hours for the person to collect it. This app makes it easy for those in need to request for Blood units at IRCS NHQ.
- Once the request is placed through the app, the requisite units become visible to IRCS, NHQ blood bank in its E-Raktkosh dashboard and this allows assured delivery within the specified time.
- This feature will make it easy for a blood seeker to obtain blood & shall bring the added advantage of complete transparency & single window access to the service.

About Indian Red Cross Society -

- The Indian Red Cross is a voluntary humanitarian organisation having a network of over 1100 branches throughout the country, providing relief in times of disasters/emergencies and promotes health & care of the vulnerable people and communities.
- It is a leading member of the largest independent humanitarian organisation in the world, the International Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement.
- The movement has three main components, the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), 192 National Societies and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- The Mission of the Indian Red Cross is to inspire, encourage and initiate at all times all forms of humanitarian activities so that human suffering can be minimised and even prevented and thus contribute to creating more congenial climate for peace.
- Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) was established in 1920 under the Indian Red Cross Society Act and incorporated under Parliament Act XV of 1920. The act was last amended in 1992 and of rules were formed in 1994.
- The IRCS has 36 State / Union Territories Branches with their more than 1100 districts and sub district branches.
- Honourable President of India is the President and Hon'ble Union Health Minister is the Chairman of the Society. The Vice Chairman is elected by the members of the Managing Body.

- The Chairman and 6 members are nominated by the President. The remaining 12 are elected by the state and union territory branches through an electoral college.

Background of Indian Red Cross Society -

- During the first world war in 1914, India had no organisation for relief services to the affected soldiers, except a branch of the St. John Ambulance Association and by a Joint Committee of the British Red Cross.
- A bill to constitute the Indian Red Cross Society, Independent of the British Red Cross, was introduced in the Indian Legislative Council on 3rd March 1920 by Sir Claude Hill, member of the Viceroy's Executive Council who was also Chairman of the Joint war Committee in India.
- The Bill was passed on 17th March 1920 and became Act XV of 1920 with the assent of the Governor General on the 20th March 1920.

Sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes

The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the term of the Commission to examine the issue of sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes by 6 months i.e. up to 31.1.2021.

Background -

- Till date, sub-categorisation of OBCs as recommended by a few Commissions and implemented by some states has all used indicators of social backwardness as the criteria.
- The **First Backward Class Commission report of 1955**, also known as the **Kalekar report**, had proposed sub-categorisation of OBCs into backward and extremely backward communities.
- In the **Mandal Commission report of 1979**, a dissent note by member L R Naik proposed sub-categorisation in intermediate and depressed backward classes.
- In 2015, former National Commission for OBCs under **Justice (Retd) Eswaraiah** asked for sub-categorisation within OBCs into Extremely Backward Classes (Group A), More Backward Classes (Group B) and Backward Classes (Group C).
- The present Commission was constituted under Article 340 of the Constitution with the approval of President on 2nd October, 2017. The Commission, headed by **Justice (Retd.) Smt. G. Rohini** commenced functioning on 11th October, 2017 and has since interacted with all the States/UTs which have subcategorised OBCs, and the State Backward Classes Commissions.

Details -

- The commission to examine sub-categorisation of OBCs is all set to recommend a fixed quota.
- It is possibly between 8 and 10 per cent of the 27 per cent OBC quota for about 1,900 of the 2,633 castes on the central list.
- This is the first government-mandated exercise to quantify the skewed flow of benefits among different OBC communities and suggest steps to correct the imbalance.

Need of sub-categorisation -

- Presently, half of these 1,900-odd castes have availed less than three per cent of reservation in jobs and education, and the rest availed zero benefits during the last five years.
- The central government had appointed the Commission under Justice (Retd) G Rohini in October, 2017.
- Five-year data on OBC quota implementation in central jobs and higher educational institutions showed that a very small section has cornered the lion's share.
- A/c to the Commission, the classification is based on relative benefits availed and not relative social backwardness, which involves parameters such as social status, traditional occupations, religion, etc.
- Using the quantum of benefits enjoyed by different communities to sub-categorise OBCs is a major departure from recommendations of several Commissions in the past.

National Commission for Backward Classes -

- **102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018** provides constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).

- It has the authority to **examine complaints and welfare measures regarding socially and educationally backward classes**.
- Previously NCBC was a statutory body under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.
- The Commission consists of **five members** including a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three other Members **appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal**.
- The conditions of service and tenure of office of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and other Members is determined by President.
- Article 340 deals with the need to, inter alia, identify those "socially and educationally backward classes", understand the conditions of their backwardness, and make recommendations to remove the difficulties they face. 102nd Constitution Amendment Act inserted new Articles 338 B and 342 A.
- The commission investigates and monitors all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the socially and educationally backward classes under the Constitution or under any other law to evaluate the working of such safeguards.
- It participates and advises on the socio-economic development of the socially and educationally backward classes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State.
- It presents to the President, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards. The President lays such reports before each House of Parliament.

Government e-Marketplace

Government e-Marketplace (GeM), a **Special Purpose Vehicle under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, has made it mandatory for sellers to enter the Country of Origin while registering all new products on GeM. GeM has taken this significant step to promote 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

What has been introduced?
- Further, sellers, who had already uploaded their products before the introduction of this new feature on GeM, are being reminded regularly to update the Country of Origin, with a warning that their products shall be removed from GeM if they fail to update the same.
- GeM has also enabled a provision for indication of the percentage of local content in products. With this new feature, now, the Country of Origin as well as the local content percentage are visible in the marketplace for all items. More importantly, the 'Make in India' filter has now been enabled on the portal.
- Buyers can choose to buy only those products that meet the minimum 50% local content criteria. In case of Bids, Buyers can now reserve any bid for Class I Local suppliers (Local Content > 50%).
- For those Bids below INR 200 crore, only Class I and Class II Local Suppliers (Local content > 50% and > 20% respectively) are eligible to bid, with Class I supplier getting purchase preference. Some Snapshots of the Local Content Features on the GeM Portal are shown in *Annexure*.

What is GeM?
- Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is **a one stop portal to facilitate online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organisations / PSUs**.
- GeM aims to **enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement**.
- It provides the **tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation** to facilitate the government users achieve the best value for their money.
- All Central government and State Government Ministries/Departments including its attached/ subordinate offices, Central and State autonomous bodies, Central and State Public Sector Units and local bodies etc. are authorised to make procurement through GeM portal.

Benefits of GeM -

Benefits of GeM to the Government, Sellers and the Indian industry and economy

1. **Transparency** - GeM eliminates human interface in vendor registration, order placement and payment processing, to a great extent. Being an open platform, GeM offers no entry barriers to bonafide suppliers who wish to do business with the Government. At every step, SMS and e-Mail notifications are sent to both buyer, his/her head of organisation, paying authorities as well as sellers.

2. **Efficiency** - Direct purchase on GeM can be done in a matter of minutes and the entire process in online, end to end integrated and with online tools for assessing price reasonability. For procurements of higher value, the bidding/RA facility on GeM is among the most transparent and efficient, in comparison to e-procurement systems in vogue within the Government sector. For creating a bid/RA, the buyer does not need to create his/her own technical specifications as they have been standardised on GeM.   These would make GeM an extremely powerful tool in the hands of Government organisations to plan and procure.

3. **Secure and safe** - GeM is a completely secure platform and all the documents on GeM are e-Signed at various stages by the buyers and sellers. The antecedents of the suppliers are verified online and automatically through MCA21, Aadhar and PAN databases. In addition, SEBI empaneled credit rating agencies are also being used for conducting third-party assessment of suppliers. This would further strengthen due diligence about the veracity of suppliers wanting to do business on GeM.For high value bids/RA on GeM, an e-Bank Guarantee is also being introduced.

4. **Savings to the Government** - The transparency, efficiency and ease of use of the GeM portal has resulted in a substantial reduction in prices on GeM, in comparison to the tender, Rate Contract and direct purchase rates.

National Testing Agency

Union Minister for Human Resources Development has announce that National Testing Agency (NTA) has launched Hindi Tests on National Test Abhyas mobile app.

What is National Testing Agency?

- National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts competitive exams like JEE and NEET has launched its Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered smartphone app to empower engineering and medical aspirants to prepare safely from their homes, for entrance exams including JEE Main, NEET.
- National Testing Agency (NTA) was established as a **Society registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860.**
- It is an **autonomous** and **self-sustained testing organisation** to conduct entrance examinations for admission/fellowship in **higher educational institutions**.
- It is to conduct **efficient, transparent** and **international standards tests** in order to assess the competency of candidates for admission and recruitment purposes.
- NTA is chaired by an **eminent educationist appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development**. The **Chief Executive Officer** (CEO) will be the Director-General to be appointed by the Government. There will be a **Board of Governors** comprising members from user institutions.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan on 20th June 2020 to boost employment and livelihood opportunities for migrant workers returning to villages, in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak. The Abhiyaan was flagged off from village Telihar, Block Beldaur, district Khagaria, Bihar on June 20.

Details -

- An amount of Rs 50,000 Crores would be spent **for building durable rural infrastructure** under the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan.
- 25 work areas have been identified for employment in villages, for development of various works. These 25 works or projects are related to meet the needs of the villages lik**e rural housing for the poor, Plantations, provision of drinking water through Jal Jeevan mission,**

Panchayat Bhavans, community toilets, rural mandis, rural roads, other infrastructure like Cattle Sheds, Anganwadi Bhavans etc.

- The Abhiyan shall also **provide modern facilities in rural areas such as high speed and cheap internet** in every rural household to help the youth and children. It is the first time that the rural areas are using more internet than the urban areas. Hence the laying of fibre cable and provision of internet are also made a part of the Abhiyan.
- These works will be done while staying in his own village, while staying with his family.
- The farmers are being directly linked to the market and that the Government has provided an **investment of Rs 1,00,000 Crore for linkages like cold storage** etc.

What is 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan'?

- This **Abhiyaan of 125 days, will work in mission mode**, will involve focused implementation of 25 categories of works/ activities **in 116 districts**, each with a large concentration of returnee migrant workers in 6 states of **Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Odisha**.
- Public works to be undertaken during this campaign will have **a resource envelope of Rs. 50,000 crores**.
- The Abhiyaan will be a convergent **effort between 12 different Ministries/Departments**, namely; Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Road Transport & Highways, Mines, Drinking Water & Sanitation, Environment, Railways, Petroleum & Natural Gas, New & Renewable Energy, Border Roads, Telecom and Agriculture, to expedite implementation of 25 public infrastructure works and works relating to augmentation of livelihood opportunities.
- **The Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal Ministry** for this campaign and the campaign will be implemented in close coordination with the State Governments. Central Nodal Officers of the rank of Joint Secretary and above will be appointed to oversee the effective and timely implementation of various schemes in the identified districts.

Objectives -
The major objectives of the initiative include:
- **Provide livelihood opportunity** to returning migrants and similarly affected rural citizens
- Saturate villages with **public infrastructure and create livelihood opportunities** viz. Roads, Housing, Anganwadis, Panchayat Bhavans, various livelihood assets and Community Complexes among others
- The basket of a wide variety of works will ensure that each migrant worker is able to get an opportunity of employment according to his skill, in the coming 125 days. The Program will also prepare for **expansion and development of livelihoods over a longer term**.

Aspirational Districts Programme

Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region has reviewed the status and healthcare facility in 'Aspirational' districts with special focus on North East.

What is 'Aspirational District Programme'?
- Aspirational Districts are those districts in India, that are affected by poor socio-economic indicators. These are aspirational in the context, that improvement in these districts can lead to the overall improvement in human development in India. The 115 districts were identified from 28 states, at least one from each state.
- **Objective** - Achieve balanced development in India by uplifting 115 districts.
- **Under phase-1 of ADP**, 115 districts were identified based on the **level of human development, physical infrastructure, threat of left wing extremism (LWE) and the views of the state governments**.
- Over 15 percent of India's population lives in these districts. A list of **49 target indicators** has been developed by **NITI Aayog**. **Relatively poorer endowment of physical resources, lack of infrastructure, poor social capital, low standards of health, nutrition, education and skill, poor governance and above all, inhabitants demotivated due to years of poverty and deprivation** can be cited as major contributory factors.

Constraints -
• **Governance challenges** - Governance inadequacy; Multiplicity of implementing agencies and schemes.
• No accountability on the part of either the government or district administrations.
• Non availability of periodical data.
• Lack of social awareness and community participation.
• Lack of competitiveness among districts to improve developmental performance.

Way forward -
Lifting levels of aspirations through a vision and district plan, adequate institutional arrangements, convergence in all stakeholders' efforts and above all, ranking-based public competition among the districts.
1. **Create a positive narrative of development by making development a mass movement -** Referring to these districts as 'aspirational' rather than 'backward' highlights the programme's recognition that people are the most valuable resource to improve a district's performance.
2. **Use data to inform decision-making and spur competition among districts -** Composite index and Data - NITI Aayog has identified 49 key performance indicators (KPIs) with 81 data points. The ADP assigns different weights to the indicators, informed by a policy focus on social sectors. Health and nutrition, and education have been given the highest weightage and cumulatively, they account for 21 of the 49 indicators.
3. **Converge initiatives across all levels of government -** The ADP aims to ensure convergence between different government schemes. To achieve this, the action plan prepared by the district collectors of aspirational districts will identify the thrust activity, map existing schemes and their respective implementation agencies and set targets for rapid improvement.
4. **Promote federalism and put in place institutional mechanisms to ensure teamwork between the central, state and districts administration -** Harnessing and creating synergies among the different stakeholders is the backbone of the ADP. While states are the main drivers and district magistrates/collectors are the fulcrum of the programme, a major innovation here is the emphasis on team foundation. Set up Empowered Committees of Secretaries of Government of India to supervise and troubleshoot.
5. **Partner with expert organisations with demonstrated technical competence -** While data-based objective ranking and competition among districts are major elements of the ADP's strategy, another core component is bringing in technical expertise through public private partnerships.

Sickle Cell Disease

Commemorating a webinar 'National Sickle Cell Conclave' to mark the 'World Sickle Cell Day', organised by FICCI, jointly with Ministry of Tribal Affairs and others, the Minister has emphasised on the need to create more awareness about Sickle Cell disease.

What is 'Sickle Cell Disease'?
• Sickle cell disease is a group of disorders that **affects haemoglobin, the molecule in red blood cells that delivers oxygen to cells throughout the body.**
• People with this disorder have a typical haemoglobin molecules called haemoglobin S, which can **distort red blood cells into a sickle, or crescent shape**.
• Signs and symptoms of sickle cell disease usually begin in early childhood. Characteristic features of this disorder include **a low number of red blood cells (anaemia), repeated infections, and periodic episodes of pain**. The severity of symptoms varies from person to person. Some people have mild symptoms, while others are frequently hospitalised for more serious complications.

What happens in a 'Sickle Cell disease'?
• The signs and symptoms of sickle cell disease are **caused by the sickling of red blood cells. When red blood cells sickle, they break down prematurely, which can lead to anaemia.**
• Anaemia can cause **shortness of breath, fatigue, and delayed growth and development** in children.

- The rapid breakdown of red blood cells may also cause **yellowing of the eyes and skin, which are signs of jaundice**.
- Painful episodes can occur when sickled red blood cells, which are stiff and inflexible, get stuck in small blood vessels. These episodes deprive tissues and organs of oxygen-rich blood and can lead to organ damage, especially in the lungs, kidneys, spleen, and brain.
- A particularly serious complication of sickle cell disease is **high blood pressure in the blood vessels that supply the lungs (pulmonary hypertension)**. Pulmonary hypertension occurs in about one-third of adults with sickle cell disease and **can lead to heart failure**.

IN-SPACe

The Union Cabinet has created Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) to provide private players to use Indian space infrastructure. This is part of reforms aimed at giving a boost to private sector participation in the entire range of space activities.

About IN-SPACe -
- **Indian National Space, Promotion & Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)** will help private players through encouraging policies, through a regulatory environment that is friendly as well as guiding private players in space activities.
- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will remain the basic body** that decides what missions are to be undertaken but this new body will help fill the gaps.
- The IN-SPACe will also **hand-hold, promote and guide the private industries in space activities** through encouraging policies and a friendly regulatory environment.
- **'New Space India Limited (NSIL)'** would endeavour to **reorient space activities from a** '**supply driven**' **model to a** '**demand driven**' **one**, thereby ensuring optimum utilisation of the nation's space assets.

About New Space India Limited -
- The establishment of NSIL was announced in **Budget 2019**.
- One of the mandates of NSIL is to **mass-produce and manufacture the SSLV and the more powerful PSLV** in partnership with the private sector in India through technology transfers.
- Its aim is to use research and development carried out by ISRO over the years for **commercial purposes through Indian industry partners.**
- It differs from ISRO's existing commercial arm **Antrix Corporation** - Antrix will handle ISRO's commercial deals for satellites and launch vehicles with **foreign customers.** NSIL will deal with capacity building of **local industry** for space manufacturing.

How will it benefit the private sector?
- Permission to use the facilities of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will relieve companies of the burden of going overseas to test equipment, perform launches, and access geospatial data.
- Apart from access to facilities, access to the ISRO team would be invaluable for any start-up. The government has also said that the repository of geospatial data from ISRO satellites will be made available to private firms, although strict guidelines would be followed in releasing this data due to its sensitivity.
- The opening up of the sector will deepen those relationships and help to overcome manpower and budgetary constraints.
- Modern communications systems, as well as geospatially-dependent businesses, including agricultural and environmental management, and road alignment, depend on space activities. Space exploration has led to huge advances in health care, weather prediction, and material sciences. The opening up of the sector could lead to a burst of investment.

Benefits for India's space sector -
- ISRO, which tenders out much of its equipment, will actively seek partnerships in projects across various areas.
- The demand for satellite launches is growing. ISRO has estimated it must launch 15,000 satellites in the next six-nine years. It doesn't have the manpower to do this and would require

massive budgetary increases to build that capacity even though the satellite business represents a $30-billion opportunity. The private sector could help meet shortfalls without placing extra burden on the exchequer.
- These reforms will allow ISRO to focus more on research and development activities, new technologies, exploration missions and human spaceflight programme.
- There has also been relatively little investment in space exploration. As of 2019, cumulative funding for 120 start-ups was estimated at just $6-7 million. More investment in space will have huge positive externalities.

Annual TB Report 2020

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare has recently released the annual TB Report 2020.

Achievements in the report -
- Around 24.04 Lakh TB patients have been notified in 2019. This amounts to **a 14% increase in TB notification** as compared to the year 2018.
- Achieving near-complete on-line notification of TB patients through the NIKSHAY system.
- Reduction in the number of missing cases to 2.9 lakh cases as against more than 10 lakhs in 2017.
- Private sector notifications increased by 35% with 6.78 lakh TB patients notified.
- Due to easy availability of molecular diagnostics, the proportion of children diagnosed with TB increased to 8% in 2019 compared to 6% in 2018.
- Provision of HIV testing for all notified TB patients increased from 67% in 2018 to 81% in 2019.
- Expansion of treatment services has resulted in a 12% improvement in the treatment success rate of notified patients. For 2019 it is 81% compared to 69% in 2018.
- More than 4.5 lakh DOT Centers provide treatment covering almost every village across the country.
- NIKSHAY also expanded the provision of four Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) schemes of the programme –
    - Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) to TB patients
    - The incentive to Treatment Supporters
    - Incentive to Private Providers and
    - Transport incentive to TB patients in the notified tribal areas

Programme towards elimination of tuberculosis -
- The program aims to improve the coverage and quality of TB control interventions in nine states: **Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Assam and Tamil Nadu**.
- It will **support the Government of India's (GoI) National Strategic Plan to end TB in India by 2025.** It will do so by helping improve and strengthen diagnostics and management of drug-resistant tuberculosis and increase the capacity of public institutions engaged in monitoring and treating TB in the country.
- The Program will **provide financial incentives to private sector care providers** for reporting cases of TB and ensuring that their patients complete the treatment regimen.
- It will also provide **Direct Benefit Transfers to patients** for acquiring the critical nutrition needed during treatment.
- The Program will even help the GoI **strengthen** the monitoring and implementation of **Nikshay -** a web-based TB case monitoring system introduced by the government.

About Nikshay Poshan Yojana -
- It is **a direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme for nutritional support to Tuberculosis (TB) patients** rolled out in April 2018 by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The scheme is **a centrally sponsored scheme** under National Health Mission (NHM). Financial norms of NHM in terms of cost sharing are applicable to the scheme.
- The scheme is **not related to Poshan Mission** which is an initiative of Ministry of Women and Child Development.

- This scheme is **implemented across all States and UTs in India**. All TB patients notified on or after 1st April 2018 including all existing TB patients under treatment are eligible to receive incentives. The patient must be registered\notified on the NIKSHAY portal.
- **Financial incentive of Rs.500/- per month for each notified TB patient** for duration during which the patient is on anti-TB treatment.
- As the scheme is registered under Direct Benefit Transfer, **incentives can be distributed in cash** (only via DBT preferably through Aadhaar enabled bank accounts) **or in-kind**. **The States that have been distributing incentives in-kind are allowed to continue to do so**, subject to the condition that the total value of the food basket being distributed must not be less than Rs. 500 per month.

Victory Day Parade 2020

A tri-service contingent of the Indian armed forces comprising 75 all ranks, led by a colonel rank officer will participate in the Military Parade at Red Square, Moscow on 24th June, 2020 to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Victory of the Soviet People in the great Patriotic War of 1941-45.

Background -
- Victory Day marks **Nazi Germany's surrender to the Soviet Union** in 1945.
- It became the end of the **Great Patriotic War for the USSR**, which lost about 25 million citizens in the four years of fighting.
- Interestingly, until its 20th anniversary (May 9, 1965), Victory Day was not a major holiday.
- Apart from the anniversaries in 1965 and 1985, **Victory Day celebrations in the Soviet Union did not feature a military parade**. This tradition started in 1995.
- It is the biggest parade is in Moscow's Red Square, showcasing Russia's military forces. Most veterans wear their medals as they head to the parade or an event organised by a local veteran organisation. Another tradition is to give flowers, usually red carnations, to veterans in the street and to lay wreaths at the war memorial sites.

70th Anniversary of Korean War

On the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi paid rich tribute to the bravehearts who sacrificed their lives in the pursuit of peace on the Korean Peninsula.

What led to a war in Korean peninsula?
- The origins of the war lay in the fact that Korea had been under Japanese occupation since 1910.
- When the Japanese were defeated (August 1945), the USA and the USSR agreed to divide the country into two zones along the 38th parallel (the 38-degree-north line of latitude), so that they could jointly organise the Japanese surrender and withdrawal – Russia in the north (which had a frontier with the USSR) and the Americans in the south.
- The US was not intending to agree on a permanent division of the Korean peninsula. The United Nations wanted free elections for the whole country and the US agreed, believing that since their zone contained two-thirds of the population, the communist north would be outvoted.
- However, the unification of Korea, like that of Germany, soon became part of Cold War and two different governments in Korea were formed in the year 1948.
- In the North, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) under the leadership of Korean Communists was established, however, in the South, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) by a group of parties under the leadership of Syngman Rhee was elected.

The Korean War -
- Rhee was an anticommunist and wanted an alliance with Chiang KaiShek to prevent the spread of communism.
- Both the states organised their armies and frequent clashes happened between them.
- In June 1950 war broke out between North and South Korea. Chinese revolution had already taken place & United States feared further expansion of communism in this area.

- The United States sent troops to support South Korea in the war.
- These troops fought as the troops of the United Nations because the Security Council of the United Nations had passed a resolution condemning North Korea & asked members of the United Nations to aid South Korea.

After the entry of the American forces in the war, the Chinese forces also entered the war and the situation took a very serious turn. There was a real danger of another world war breaking out, as by this time Soviet Union also had acquired atomic bombs. However, though the war in Korea raged for three years, it did not turn into a world war. **The armistice was signed in 1953 – Korea remained divided into two separate states**.

What is the Korean Armistice Agreement?

- The 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement, was a ceasefire though there was **no official declaration of the end of the war**, and the conflict has continued, without fighting between the parties.
- South Korea, under **President Syngman Rhee,** did not sign the armistice. In the absence of an official peace treaty, as is the norm, **the two officially remain at war.**
- However, in December 1991, **North and South Korea signed a pact where they agreed to refrain from aggressions**, in a step that would lead to better relations and a potential resolution of the situation.
- Since the armistice was enforced, there have been several violations of it from both North and South Korea, leading to persistent tensions between the two countries.

India's role in Korean War -

- Instead of sending its armed forces on the request of UN, India had sent a medical unit to Korea as a humanitarian gesture, India's medical services are still fondly remembered in Korea by both sides
- India was the chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission which would handle the prisoners of war(PoWs) of both sides and interview them to determine which of them wanted to go back.
- India dispatched a 6000 Indian Custodial Force to Korea.

Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana

Union Cabinet has approved a scheme for interest subvention of 2% for a period of 12 months, to all Shishu loan accounts under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) to all eligible borrowers.

Details -

- This Scheme is for implementation of one of the measures relating to MSMEs, announced under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. Under PMMY, loans for income generating activities up to Rs. 50,000 are termed as Shishu loans. PMMY loans are extended by Member Lending Institutions viz. Scheduled Commercial Banks, Non Banking Finance Companies and Micro Financial Institutions, registered with Mudra Ltd.
- The interest subvention would be payable for the months in which the accounts are not in NPA category including for the months that the account becomes a performing asset again, after turning NPA. The scheme will incentivise people who will make regular repayments of loans.
- The Scheme will be implemented through the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and will be in operation for 12 months.

About Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana -

- It is a scheme to **extend collateral free loans by Banks, NBFCs and MFIs to Small/Micro business enterprises and individuals in the non-agricultural sector** to enable their business activities and to generate self employment.
- For implementing the Scheme, government has set up a new institution named, **Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd (MUDRA)**. It provides **refinance to all banks and Last Mile Financiers** seeking refinancing of small business loans given under PMMY.
- The scheme services whose credit needs are below Rs. 10 lakh.
- Loans can be availed under three categories -

- **Shishu** for loans up to Rs.50,000;
- **Kishor** for loans above Rs. 50,000 and up to Rs.5 lakh;
- **Tarun** for loans above Rs.5 lakh and up to Rs.10 lakh.
- Mudra debit cards are issued to borrowers. Using these, they can withdraw the loan from any ATM in India, as and when they need the money.

Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved setting up of **Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) worth Rs. 15000 crore**.

Need -
Government has been implementing several schemes for incentivising the investment made by dairy cooperative sector for development of dairy infrastructure. However, government realises that even MSMEs and Private companies also need to be promoted and incentivised for their involvement in processing and value addition infrastructure.

Benefits -
- AHIDF would **facilitate much needed incentivisation of investments in establishment of such infrastructure for dairy and meat processing** and value addition infrastructure and establishment of animal feed plant in the private sector.
- The eligible beneficiaries under the Scheme would be **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), MSMEs, Section 8 Companies, Private Companies and individual entrepreneur** with minimum 10% margin money contribution by them. The balance 90% would be the loan component to be made available by scheduled banks.
- Government of India will provide **3% interest subvention to eligible beneficiaries**.
- There will be **2 years moratorium period for principal loan amount and 6 years repayment period** thereafter.
- **Government of India would also set up Credit Guarantee Fund of Rs. 750 crore to be managed by NABARD**. Credit guarantee would be provided to those sanctioned projects which are covered under MSME defined ceilings. Guarantee Coverage would be upto 25% of Credit facility of borrower.

Significance -
- There is huge potential waiting to be unlocked in investment through private sector. The INR 15,000 cr. AHIDF and the interest subvention scheme for private investors **will ensure availability of capital to meet upfront investment required for these projects** and also help enhance overall returns/ pay back for investors.
- Such investments in processing and value addition infrastructure by eligible beneficiaries would also **promote export of these processed and value added commodities**.
- Since, almost 50-60% of final value of dairy output in India flows back to farmers, therefore, growth in this sector can have significant **direct impact on farmer's income**.
- Size of dairy market and farmers' realisation from milk sales is closely linked with development of organised off-take by cooperative and private dairies. Thus, investment incentivisation in AHIDF would not only **leverage 7 times private investment but would also motivate farmers to invest more on inputs** thereby driving **higher productivity** leading to increase in farmers income.
- The measures approved through AHIDF would also help in **direct and indirect livelihood creation for 35 lakh people**.

Skills Build Reignite

The Skills Build Reignite tends to provide job seekers and entrepreneurs, with access to free online coursework and mentoring support designed to help them reinvent their careers and businesses.

Details -
- **Job seekers, individual business owners, entrepreneurs and any individual with learning aspirations** can now tap into host of industry relevant content on topics including **Artificial intelligence, Cloud, Data analytics and security to reskill and upskill themselves, at no cost**.
- Its special feature is the **personalised coaching for entrepreneurs**, seeking advice to help establish or restart their small businesses as they begin to focus on recovery to emerge out of the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Courses for small business owners include, for example, financial management, business strategy, digital strategy, legal support and more. Plus, IBM volunteers will serve as mentors to some of the 30,000 Skills Build users in 100 communities in at least five major regions worldwide to help reinvigorate local communities.

Background -
In November 2019, IBM India, in partnership with Directorate General of Training (DGT), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, and its implementation partners, made the **SkillsBuild online learning platform** available to Indian students through Bharatskills of DGT. Digital classrooms on this platform are available to students and instructors from the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and technical education ecosystem in India.

RBI to supervise Cooperative Banks

To protect depositors, the Centre has decided to bring all urban and multi-state cooperative banks under the supervision of the RBI. The Union Cabinet approved an ordinance to this effect, recently. **Currently, these banks come under dual regulation of the RBI and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies**.

About Cooperative Banks -
Co-operative banks in India are registered under the **States Cooperative Societies Act.** The Co-operative banks are also regulated by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **governed by the** - Banking Regulations Act 1949, and Banking Laws (Co-operative Societies) Act, 1955.

Features of Cooperative Banks -
- **Customer Owned Entities -** Co-operative bank members are both customer and owner of the bank.
- **Democratic Member Control -** Co-operative banks are owned and controlled by the members, who democratically elect a board of directors. Members usually have equal voting rights, according to the cooperative principle of "**one person, one vote".**
- **Profit Allocation -** A significant part of the yearly profit, benefits or surplus is usually allocated to constitute reserves and a part of this profit can also be distributed to the co-operative members, with legal and statutory limitations.
- **Financial Inclusion -** They have played a significant role in the financial inclusion of unbanked rural masses.

Ashadhi Bij

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has greeted people on the occasion of Ashadhi Bij, the Kutch New Year.

What is 'Ashadhi Bij'?
- **Ashadi Beej or Ashadhi Bij** is observed on the **second day of the Shukla Paksha** or waxing phase of moon in Ashada month.
- **Region** - It is the Kutchi New Year. This Hindu New Year is observed in the Kutch region in Gujarat.
- **Celebrations** - Ashadi Beej is mostly a traditional affair and is a celebration of rains. During Ashadhi-beej, farmers check the moisture in the atmosphere to help predict which crop would do best in coming monsoon.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has paid tributes to Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee on his Punya Tithi.

About Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee -
- Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was born in a Bengali family in 1901. His father Ashutosh Mukherjee was a judge of the Calcutta High Court.
- He started his initial education in Bhawanipur's Mitra Institution in 1906. He passed his matriculation exam and was admitted to Presidency College. He stood seventeenth in the Inter-Arts Examination in 1916 and graduated in English, securing the first position in first class in 1921. He lost his father in 1924, the same year he enrolled as an advocate in Calcutta High Court.
- At the age of 33, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee became the **youngest vice-chancellor of Calcutta University in 1934**.
- During Mukherjee's term as Vice-Chancellor, Rabindranath Tagore delivered the university convocation address in Bengali for the first time, and the Indian vernacular was introduced as a subject for the highest examination.
- **Mukherjee demanded the partition of Bengal in 1946 to prevent the inclusion of its Hindu-majority areas in a Muslim-dominated East Pakistan**. A meeting held by the Mahasabha on April 15, 1947, in Tarakeswar, authorised him to take steps for ensuring partition of Bengal.
- **In May 1947, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee wrote a letter to Lord Mountbatten telling him that Bengal must be partitioned even if India was not**. He also opposed a failed bid for a united but independent Bengal made in 1947 by Sarat Bose, the brother of Subhas Chandra Bose, and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, a Bengali Muslim politician.
- After he left the Indian National Congress due to difference of opinion with the then-Prime Minister Dr Jawaharlal Nehru on Jammu and Kashmir issues, **he co- founded Janata Party in the year 1977-1979, which later on became the Bharatiya Janata Party**.
- Shyama Prasad Mukherjee died after 40 days of being arrested by the Jammu and Kashmir State police for entering the state without permit. He passed away in jail under mysterious circumstances.

Mar Thoma Church

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has addressed distinguished members of Mar Thoma Church on the 90th birthday celebrations of reverend Dr Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan.

About Malankara Mar Thoma Church -
- Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church otherwise called as Mar Thoma Church in a shorter form, which is a part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. is one of the ancient Churches in the world.
- It is traditionally believed that St. Thomas (Mar Thoma in Syriac), the disciple of Jesus Christ came to India in AD 52 and established the Church in the Malabar coast. Kerala was known as Malankara in those times.
- Being rooted in the Bible, the Church maintains its Episcopal heritage and value oriented democratic form of administration.
- The Church accepts Holy Bible as the basis for all matters of faith and doctrine, and the Nicene Creed formulated in accordance with the Holy Scripture. The Church is regarded as a 'bridge' church in the Ecumenical world.

Nasha Mukt Bharat

"Nasha Mukt Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21) for 272 Most Affected Districts' was launched recently by Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on the occasion of "**International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**".

Components of Nasha Mukt Bharat -
The Action Plan has the following components -
• Awareness generation programmes;
• Focus on Higher Educational institutions, University Campuses and Schools;
• Community outreach and identification of dependent population;
• Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital settings; and
• Capacity Building Programmes for Service Provider.

What is the programme?
Based on the finding of the National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India and list of districts which are vulnerable from the supply point of view provided by **Narcotics Control Bureau, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** would undertake intervention programmes in vulnerable districts across the country with an aim to -
• Reach out to Children and Youth for awareness about ill effect of drug use; Increase community participation and public cooperation;
• Supporting Government Hospitals for opening up De-addiction Centres in addition to existing Ministry Supported De-addiction Centres (IRCAs); and
• Conducting Training programme for participants.

Other details -
• The Ministry has also prepared a **National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction** for the period 2018-2025 which aims at reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse through a multi-pronged strategy involving education, de-addiction and rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families.
• The Action Plan includes components for preventive education and awareness generation, capacity building, treatment and rehabilitation, setting quality standards, focussed intervention in vulnerable areas, skill development, vocational training and livelihood support of ex-drug addicts, State/UT specific interventions, surveys, studies, evaluation and research etc.

About "International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking" -
• In December 1987, the UN General Assembly decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.
• The date June 26 is to commemorate Lin Zexu's dismantling of the opium trade in Humen, Guangdong, ending in June 25 1839 , just before the First Opium War in China.
• The theme for the 2020 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking "**Better Knowledge for Better Care**" emphasises the need to improve the understanding of the world drug problem and how in turn, better knowledge will foster greater international cooperation for countering its impact on health, governance and security.

Sanskritik Sadbhav Mandap

Union Minister of Minority Affairs has recently inaugurated "Sanskritik Sadbhav Mandap" at Rampur, Uttar Pradesh.

Details -
• It is constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karykram (PMJVK).
• This community centre will be utilised for various socio-economic-cultural activities, skill development training, coaching, relief activities during disaster such as Corona and different sports activities.

What is Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram?
• The erstwhile **Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP)**, a **centrally sponsored scheme** has been **restructured** and renamed as **Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram**.
• MsDP, a centrally sponsored scheme, **launched to address the development deficits in 90 minority concentration districts in the country** to address the development deficits.

- It has been identified as **one of the Core of the Core Schemes under National Development Agenda**.
- It aims at **improving the socio-economic parameters of basic amenities** for improving the quality of life of the people and reducing imbalances in the Minority Concentration Areas.
- Minority Concentration Areas have been identified based on both population data (25% of the total population belongs to minority communities) and backwardness parameters of Census 2001 of these areas.
- The backwardness parameters are:-
  - Religion-specific socio-economic indicators at the district level –
    - Literacy rate;
    - Female literacy rate ;
    - Work participation rate; and
    - Female work participation rate; and
  - Basic amenities indicators at the district level –
    - Percentage of households with pucca walls'
    - Percentage of households with safe drinking water &
    - Percentage of households with electricity
- The projects considered are additional class rooms, laboratories, school buildings, hostels, toilets, buildings for Polytechnics, ITIs, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres / Sub-centres, Anganwadi Centres, Rural Housing etc.
- Education, Health and Skill are the priority under MsDP.
- The projects are funded in the ratio of 60:40 and for NE and Hilly States at 90:10 between the Centre and States.

PM FME Scheme

Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries has launched the **PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME)** scheme on 29th June 2020 as a part of "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan".
The Scheme would generate total investment of Rs 35,000 crore and generate 9 lakh skilled and semi-skilled employment and benefit 8 lakh units through access to information, training, better exposure and formalisation.

Details -
- It is an all India "**Centrally Sponsored PM Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM FME) scheme**" to be implemented **over a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs 10,000 crore**.
- The expenditure under the scheme would to be shared in 60:40 ratio between Central and State Governments, in 90:10 ratio with North Eastern and Himalayan States, 60:40 ratio with UTs with legislature and 100% by Centre for other UTs.

How will it work?
- The Scheme adopts **One District One Product (ODODP) approach** to reap benefit of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.
- The **States would identify food product for a district** keeping in view the existing clusters and availability of raw material. The ODOP product could be **a perishable produce based product or cereal based products or a food product widely produced in a district** and their allied sectors. Illustrative list of such products includes mango, potato, litchi, tomato, tapioca, kinnu, bhujia, petha, papad, pickle, millet based products, fisheries, poultry, meat as well as animal feed among others.
- Preference would be given to those producing ODOP products. However, units producing other products would also be supported. **Support for common infrastructure and branding & marketing would be for ODOP products**. The Scheme also place **focus on waste to wealth products, minor forest products and Aspirational Districts**.

What will be the support?

- Existing Individual micro food processing units desirous of upgradation of their unit can avail **credit-linked capital subsidy @35%** of the eligible project cost with a maximum ceiling of Rs.10 lakh per unit.
- Seed capital @ Rs. 40,000/- per SHG member would be provided for working capital and purchase of small tools. FPOs/ SHGs/ producer cooperatives would be provided **credit linked grant of 35%** for capital investment along the value chain.
- Support would be provided through **credit linked grant @ 35% for development of common infrastructure** including common processing facility, lab, warehouse, cold storage, packaging and incubation centre through FPOs/SHGs/cooperatives or state owned agencies or private enterprise to use by micro units in the cluster.
- **Support for marketing & branding** would be provided to develop brands for micro units and groups with 50% grant at State or regional level which could benefit large number of micro units in clusters.

Implementation -
- The Scheme places special focus on **capacity building and research**.
- **NIFTEM and IIFPT**, two academic and research institutions under MOFPI along with State Level Technical Institutions selected by the States would be provided support for training of units, product development, appropriate packaging and machinery for micro units.
- All the processes of the Scheme would take place on an MIS including applications by entrepreneurs, their processing, approval of various projects by the States and MoFPI, release of grant and other funds and monitoring of the project.
- Individual entrepreneurs and other stake holders desirous of availing assistance under the scheme may contact the State Nodal Agencies of their respective states/UTs regarding the roll out of scheme and contact points at the district level.

Operation Greens

Operation Greens Scheme, being implemented by MoFPI has been extended from tomato, onion and potato (TOP) crops to other notified horticulture crops for providing subsidy for their transportation and storage from surplus production area to major consumption centres.

Eligible Crops -
- **Fruits**- Mango, Banana, Guava, Kiwi, Lichi, Papaya, Citrus, Pineapple, Pomegranate, Jackfruit; **Vegetables**: - French beans, Bitter Gourd, Brinjal, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Chillies (Green), Okra, Onion, Potato and Tomato. Any other fruit/vegetable can be added in future on the basis of recommendation by Ministry of Agriculture or State Government
- **Duration of Scheme: –** for the period of six months from the date of notification i.e., 11/06/2020.
- **Eligible entities: -** Food Processors, FPO/FPC, Co-operative Societies, Individual farmers, Licensed Commission Agent, Exporters, State Marketing/Co-operative Federation, Retailers etc. engaged in processing/ marketing of fruits and vegetables.
- **Pattern of Assistance: -** Ministry will provide subsidy @50 % of the cost of the following two components, subject to the cost norms -:
  - Transportation of eligible crops from surplus production cluster to consumption centre; and/ or
  - Hiring of appropriate storage facilities for eligible crops (*for maximum period of 3 months*);

About Operation Greens -
- Launched on the lines of Operation Flood.
- **To double the income of farmers by end of 2022**.
- To promote farmer producers organisations, agri-logistics, processing facilities and professional management.
- It is **a price fixation scheme**.
- Initially it was **aimed to reduce price volatility in agriculture commodities** such as tomatoes, onions and potatoes only, but now its scope has been widened.

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