

**NATIONAL****Eklavya Model Residential Schools**

In the context of establishing quality residential schools for the promotion of education, Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) for ST students are set up in States/UTs with provisioning of funds through “Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution”. The establishing of EMRSs is based on demand of the concerned States/UTs with availability of land as an essential attribute.

As per the budget 2018-19, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons will have an Eklavya Model Residential School by 2022.

**Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS):** EMRS is a Government of India scheme for model residential school for Indian tribes (Scheduled Tribes, ST) across India.

**Objectives of EMRS:**

- Comprehensive physical, mental and socially relevant development of all students enrolled in each and every EMRS. Students will be empowered to be change agent, beginning in their school, in their homes, in their village and finally in a larger context.
- Focus differentially on the educational support to be made available to those in Standards XI and XII, and those in standards VI to X, so that their distinctive needs can be met,
- Support the annual running expenses in a manner that offers reasonable remuneration to the staff and upkeep of the facilities.
- Support the construction of infrastructure that provides education, physical, environmental and cultural needs of student life.

**IMPRESS scheme has been launched to promote Social Science Research in the country**

The Government has approved “Revitalizing Infrastructure and Systems in Education by 2022”, accordingly the scope of institutions to be funded through Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) has been enlarged to encompass School Education and Medical Education institutions, apart from Higher Education.

The Government of India, in August 2018, had sanctioned the scheme “Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS)” at a total cost of Rs. 414 Cr for implementation up to 31.03.2021.

**Highlights of the Scheme:** 1500 research projects will be awarded for 2 years to support the social science research in the higher education and to enable research to guide policy making.

**Implementing Agency:** Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR)

**Objectives of the Scheme:**

- To identify and fund research proposals in social sciences with maximum impact on the governance and society.
- To ensure selection of projects through a transparent, competitive process on online mode.
- To provide opportunity for social science researchers in any institution in the country, including all Universities (Centre and State), private institutions with 12(B) status conferred by UGC.
- ICSSR funded/recognized research institutes will also be eligible to submit research proposals on the given themes and sub-themes.

**ICSSR:** Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) was established in the year of 1969 by the Government of India to promote research in social sciences in the country.

**HEFA :** Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) is a joint venture of MHRD Government of India and Canara Bank with an agreed equity participation in the ratio of 91% and 9% respectively. It is for financing creation of capital assets in premier educational institutions in India. HEFA’s scope is greatly expanded to cover school education, educational institutes under Ministry of Health, etc. It is registered under Section 8 [Not-for-Profit] under the Companies Act 2013 as a Union Govt company and as Non-deposit taking NBFC (NBFC-ND-Type II) with RBI.

**Bhasha Sangam Programme**

The Department of School Education & Literacy has initiated Bhasha Sangam Programme to provide multilingual exposure to students in Indian Languages

The Bhasha Sangam is an initiative under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' which aims to make the students aware about the unique cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of our country. In order to celebrate the unique characteristic of our country, Bhasha Sangam provides an opportunity to schools and educational institution to provide multilingual exposure to students in Indian Languages. The objective is to familiarize every child with simple dialogues in all the 22 languages under Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India. They will be taking up one language on each working day, to enhance linguistic tolerance and promote national integration. The initiative has been widely received and accepted by States and UTs in very positive manner and schools are introducing five simple and commonly used sentences as per the convenience of students.

**Expansion of beneficiaries list under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has cleared the proposal to release deposit free LPG connections to poor families, who have not been considered earlier under PMUY on account of their names not been covered in Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC).

Poor families who could not get LPG connection under PMUY are now eligible to get a connection subject to fulfilling the eligibility norms and furnishing required documents.

New beneficiaries will include:

- SC/STs households
- Beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin),
- Beneficiaries of Antyodaya Anna Yojana(AAY),
- Forest dwellers,
- Most Backward Classes (MBC),
- Tea & Ex-Tea Garden Tribes,
- People residing in Islands / river islands

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana: PMUY is a welfare scheme being implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to provide LPG connections to families below the poverty line, guided by the strong commitment to bring about changes in the life of poor women and also protect their health

Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) is used to identify the beneficiaries (adult woman of a BPL family) and is given a deposit free LPG connection with a financial assistance of Rs.1600 per connection by the centre

This scheme will help prevent pollution and facilitate the healthy atmosphere in the families of poor people.

**'Shiksha Setu' Mobile App launched by Haryana Government**

Haryana Government has launched a mobile app named as 'Shiksha Setu' which will help in bringing transparency in the Education Department and in the administration of colleges in the state. Also, the connectivity between students, parents, teachers and administration will be improved through this mobile application.

**Shiksha Setu Mobile App:**

This mobile app will contain all the information related to attendance, fee, online admission and scholarships in all the Haryana government colleges. The details of lecturers of government colleges and officers of the Directorate can be accessed through the mobile app. The app will provide the students with instant information about assignments and updates of important notices, circulars and other programmes. There will be a facility of online fee-payment through the mobile app. The college administration will be able to check details about total fee collected and pending fee payments. The students can check the status of seats or course in every college in the state. The details of scholarship, eligibility conditions and details of applying can be checked As per the 2011 Census, Haryana has

76.64% literacy rate, having Male literacy rate of 85.4% and the literacy rate of females stands at 66.8%

### **10 monuments adopted under the ‘Adopt A Heritage’ project**

The ‘Adopt A Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan’, scheme launched in 2017. It is a collaborative effort by Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State/UTs Governments and envisages development and maintenance of tourist amenities at heritage sites and making them tourist friendly, to enhance tourism potential and cultural importance in a planned and phased manner.

Aim of the Project: The aim of the project is to provide basic amenities that include cleanliness, public conveniences, safe drinking water, ease of access for tourists, signages, illumination, Wi-fi etc.

Funding of the Project: The project envisages involvement of Private/Public Companies/Organizations and Individuals to adopt Monuments, Natural Heritage Sites and other Tourist Sites, primarily under CSR. No fund is given by Ministry of Tourism.

### **Other Information:**

Archaeological Survey of India has identified 100 monuments as “Adarsh Smarak” for upgradation of existing facilities/amenities like Wi-Fi, cafeteria, interpretation centre, brail signage, modern toilets etc.

Sl.No.	Name of Monument	State
1.	Red Fort	Delhi
2.	Gandikota Fort	Andhra Pradesh
3.	Area surrounding Gangotri Temple and Trail to Gaumukh	Uttrakhand
4.	Mt. Stok Kangri Trek, Lakakh	Jammu and Kashmir
5.	Jantar Mantar	Delhi
6.	Surajkund	Haryana
7.	Qutub Minar	Delhi
8.	Ajanta Caves	Maharashtra
9.	Leh Palace, Leh	Jammu & Kashmir
10.	Hampi (Hazara Rama Temple)	Karnataka

## **INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL**

### **International Migrants Day 2018 observed on 18th December**

The International Migrants Day 2018 observed on 18th December 2018 across the world. In accordance with the Resolution 55/93 of the United Nations General Assembly(UNGA), the International Migrants Day is observed every year on 18 December. The Resolution 55/93 was adopted by UN on 4th December 2000.

Also, Resolution 45/158 which is a resolution on the ‘International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families’ was adopted by the UNGA on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1990.

On this day many intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in different countries disseminate information on human rights and fundamental political freedoms of migrants among the people. The design of actions for the protection of migrants and experiences of migrants are also shared with the public. Making the voice of migrants heard is the main motive of celebrating this day.

The theme of International Migrants Day 2018 is “Migration with Dignity”. The reason for choosing this theme is that around 3,400 migrants and refugees died worldwide in 2018. The United Nations have given a call for migration that is safe, regular and dignified for everyone.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres on this day stated that Migration is a powerful driver of economic growth, that allows people to seek new opportunities. Migration benefits both the communities at the origin and destination..

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY****Asbestos in Baby Powder**

Over 12,000 women in the US have sued Johnson & Johnson over claims that the talcum powder is the prime cause behind their ovarian cancer. A recent investigation by Reuters claimed that the talcum powder was contaminated by carcinogenic asbestos, making it poisonous and life-threatening for women using it on themselves.

Talc: Talc is a mineral in clay mined from underground deposits. It's the softest mineral known to man and that makes it useful in a wide range of consumer and industrial products. Asbestos is also found underground, and veins of it can often be found in talc deposits, leading to a risk of cross-contamination, geologists say.

**Asbestos:**

- Asbestos is a set of six naturally occurring silicate minerals, which all have in common their eponymous asbestiform habit: i.e., long (roughly 1:20 aspect ratio), thin fibrous crystals, with each visible fiber composed of millions of microscopic "fibrils" that can be released by abrasion and other processes.
- They are commonly known by their colors, as blue asbestos, brown asbestos, white asbestos, and green asbestos.

Uses and applications: Manufacturers and builders use asbestos for its desirable physical properties. Some of those properties are sound absorption, average tensile strength, affordability, and resistance to fire, heat, and electricity. It was used in such applications as electrical insulation for hotplate wiring and in building insulation.

When asbestos is used for its resistance to fire or heat, the fibers are often mixed with cement or woven into fabric or mats. These desirable properties led to asbestos being used very widely.

Health effects: Inhalation of asbestos fibers can cause serious and fatal illnesses including lung cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis (a type of pneumoconiosis).

**Delhi HC lifts the ban on the sale of oxytocin**

In a crucial development that exposes the flaws in health policy-making in the country, the Delhi High Court quashed a government ban on the retail sale and private manufacture of oxytocin. Notified by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in April, the ban referred to a 2016 Himachal Pradesh High Court judgment, which discussed oxytocin's misuse in dairy cattle, fruits and vegetables.

**Importance of Oxytocin:**

- Oxytocin is a life-saving drug used to stem post-partum bleeding among new mothers
- Because of this, it had been listed by both the World Health Organization and the Health Ministry as an essential medicine
- Around 45,000 women die from post-partum complications in India each year, and in 38% of the cases the reason is haemorrhaging
- Without the easy availability of inexpensive oxytocin, efforts to stem the maternal mortality epidemic could have suffered a costly setback

**HC observations:**

- The court found that the government had failed to weigh the danger the ban posed to thousands of young mothers
- What is more, it had failed to show that the drug was widely misused for veterinary purposes, the purported reason behind the order
- The most damning observation in the judgment is that the Centre focussed on the health of milch animals, without considering the well-being of women
- This was despite the fact that all statutory bodies, including the Drugs Technical Advisory Board, had advised against a ban.