

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**National Institute of Nutrition**

The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) has said that it stands by its findings certifying mid-day meals without onion and garlic provided by the Akshaya Patra Foundation (APF) in Karnataka schools as compliant with nutritional norms laid down by the State government.

Issue over NIN decision

- APF provides food under the government's mid-day meals programme at 2,814 schools in the State.
- Absence of onion and garlic from meals made the food unpalatable and resulted in children consuming less quantity of food.
- The issue is not just about absorption of nutrients, but is also about the food not being as per local tastes.
- The most important question that authorities are glossing over is why not provide onion and garlic, which are available all round the year and are cheaper than other ingredients.

About NIN

- The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) is an Indian Public health, Nutrition and Translational research center located in Hyderabad.
- The institute is one of the oldest research centers in India, and the largest center, under the Indian Council of Medical Research, located in the vicinity of Osmania University.
- It was founded by Sir Robert McCarrison in the year 1918 as 'Beri-Beri' Enquiry Unit in a single room laboratory at the Pasteur Institute, Coonoor, Tamil Nadu.
- Within a short span of seven years, this unit blossomed into a "Deficiency Disease Enquiry" and later in 1928, emerged as full-fledged "Nutrition Research Laboratories" (NRL) with Dr. McCarrison as its first Director.
- It was later shifted to Hyderabad in 1958.
- At the time of its golden jubilee in 1969, it was renamed as National Institute of Nutrition (NIN).

Mandate of NIN

- Periodic Assessment of Nutrient intakes, Health and Nutrition status of the population for optimal health, and assist the Government and regulatory bodies in policy making
- Establishment of Dietary Reference Intake values, Recommended Dietary allowances, Dietary guidelines for Indian population; and assessment of Nutrient Composition of Foods
- Identify various nutrition deficiency disorders prevalent among different segments of the population
- Conduct operational research for planning and implementation of National Nutrition Programmes in the country
- Conduct surveys and study the risk factors of NCDs through multidisciplinary research
- Conduct innovative basic science Research on nutrient interactions, requirements, responses etc
- Identify and study food and environmental safety challenges for providing scientific input for policy and regulation
- Development of human resource in nutrition and also provide evidence-based nutrition knowledge to the community

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Project 'SPARROW-CBIC'**

Online writing of Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR) in SPARROW (Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window) has been launched for over 46,000 Group B & C officers of Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), working in its various formations all across the country.

Background: Online writing of APARs in SPARROW for IRS (C&CE) Officers has already been implemented w.e.f. 2016-17.

What is it?

- This Project leverages modern technology for enhancing the overall efficiency and morale of the huge workforce working in Central GST and Customs formations of CBIC. The Project is an important milestone in the journey towards digitisation and paper less working.
- It brings a complete change in APAR management of such large number of Group 'B' & 'C' Officers/ Staff of CBIC, which would, in turn, lead to better HR Management.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

Services Trade Restrictiveness Index

Union Commerce ministry has found problems with the current method of Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) which ranks countries based on their services trade policies, indicating the outcomes are biased and counter-intuitive. The 2018 edition covers a total of 45 economies (36 OECD and the rest non-OECD) and 22 sectors.

About STRI:

- Launched in 2014 and computed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The database is based on regulations currently in force.
- Uses and significance: It helps to identify which policy measures restrict trade. It provides policy makers and negotiators with information and measurement tools to improve domestic policy environment, negotiate international agreements and open up international trade in services. It can also help governments identify best practice and then focus their domestic reform efforts on priority sectors and measures.
- Scores: STRI indices take the value from 0 to 1, where 0 is completely open and 1 is completely closed.

Issues and concerns raised by India:

- Design issues that render STRI impractical for use. For example, the index seems to show the Indian services sector as one of the most restrictive, particularly in policy areas like foreign entry. This seems surprising as since 1991, the one area that has seen maximum liberalisation in India is FDI.
- Theoretical and empirical inconsistencies in the OECD methodology. For example, change in regulatory measures in one policy area can lead to dramatic changes in the STRI in another policy area which is not very useful for policy purposes.
- Developed country bias: The data seems to have been generated by rather arbitrary procedures and reflects a developed country bias.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Economic Census

The 7th Economic Census -2019 is being conducted by MoSPI to provide disaggregated information on various operational and structural aspects of all establishments in the country.

Implementing agency: MoSPI has partnered with Common Service Centres, CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle under the MEITY as the implementing agency.

About Economic Censuses:

- Launched in 1976 as a plan scheme.
- Coverage: All entrepreneurial units in the country which are involved in any economic activities of either agricultural or non-agricultural sector which are engaged in production and/or distribution of goods and/or services not for the sole purpose of own consumption.
- Objective: It provides detailed information on operational and other characteristics such as number of establishments, number of persons employed, source of finance, type of ownership etc.

- Significance: This information used for micro level/ decentralized planning and to assess contribution of various sectors of the economy in the gross domestic product (GDP).
- Total Six Economic Censuses (EC) have been conducted till date. First one was conducted in 1977 by CSO.

RBI releases 'Vision 2021' for e-payment system

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released 'Payment and Settlement Systems in India: Vision 2019 – 2021', a vision document for safe, secure, quick and affordable e-payment system. The core theme of the vision document is 'Empowering Exceptional (E)payment Experience', that stresses on empowering every Indian to access a bunch of e-payment options safely and conveniently.

Highlights of Payment Systems Vision 2021:

- It has 36 specific action points and 12 specific outcomes.
- The main agenda of the vision document is the 'no-compromise' approach towards safety and security of payment systems.
- It outlined the measures that the central bank will undertake to foster innovation, cybersecurity, financial inclusion, customer protection, and competition.
- The vision document aims to achieve "a 'highly digital' and 'cash-lite' society through Goal Posts (4Cs):
 - Competition
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Convenience
 - Confidence

Key focus areas:

- Boosting customer experience with robust grievance redressal
- Empowering e-payment service providers
- Enabling eco-system and infrastructure for the e-payment system
- Putting down forward-looking regulations
- Undertaking Risk-focused Supervision

ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction

- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) conferred Sasakawa Award 2019 for Disaster Risk Reduction to Dr. Pramod Kumar Mishra, Additional Principal Secretary to Prime Minister of India.
- Mishra was awarded for his concentrated efforts and dedication towards serving the communities that are most exposed to disasters.
- He has selflessly worked to the cause of social inclusion to reduce inequality and poverty, ultimately benefitting the socially and economically marginalized in the country.

Sasakawa Award

- The UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is awarded to an individual or institutions that have taken active efforts in reducing disaster risk in their communities and advocates for disaster risk reduction.
- It was instituted in 1986 and is jointly organized by the UNDRR and the Nippon Foundation.
- A total grant of USD 50,000 is distributed among the winners which can be either organizations or individuals.
- The theme of the 2019 Sasakawa award was "Building Inclusive and Resilient Societies".

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Climate warming and concerns associated:

A recent paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the U.S.A. shows that global warming during the past half century has contributed to a differential change in income across countries.

Concerns and challenges:

- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services has reported that, worldwide, the abundance of species has reduced by at least one-fifth, about a million species are under threat of extinction in the next few decades and 85% of wetlands have been lost.
- There are numerous instances of elite networks that are taking advantage of the situation to consolidate their control. These networks often involve governments actively or quiescently colluding with fossil fuel companies, agro-industrial elites, financial elites and other big businesses that are ignoring climate change and making a fast buck often even from the growing disasters.
- The Arctic is melting rapidly and the tenor of the recent discussions among Arctic countries suggests that even as increasing glacier melt is responsible for opening up shipping in the area, superpowers are angling to access wealth from the oil, gas, uranium and precious metals in the region.
- Policies and commitments make it clear that most governments and businesses are not interested in dealing with the climate and ecological crises. They will certainly not give these the central attention they deserve in these times of an emergency; they barely even acknowledge them.
- The atmosphere now has concentrations of over 415 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide, compared to 280 ppm in pre-industrial times.

Need of the hour: We are now at a stage where we need major overhaul of our lifestyles and patterns of consumption. The U.K. Parliament became the first recently to declare a climate emergency. It remains to be seen if appropriate actions will follow this declaration.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE
ETC**Artemis Mission

NASA's next mission to the Moon will be called Artemis.

The mission was named Artemis after the Greek mythological goddess of the Moon and twin sister to Apollo, namesake of the program that sent 12 American astronauts to the Moon between 1969 and 1972.

About Artemis Mission:

- ARTEMIS stands for Acceleration, Reconnection, Turbulence and Electrodynamics of Moon's Interaction with the Sun.
- It consists of spacecraft to measure what happens when the Sun's radiation hits our rocky moon, where there is no magnetic field to protect it.
- The ARTEMIS mission uses two of the five in-orbit spacecraft from another NASA Heliophysics constellation of satellites (THEMIS) that were launched in 2007 and successfully completed their mission earlier in 2010. The ARTEMIS mission allowed NASA to repurpose two in-orbit spacecraft to extend their useful science mission, saving tens of millions of taxpayer dollars instead of building and launching new spacecraft.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

**The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need
for tomorrow.**

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: In the context of recently published paper on climate warming by the National Academy of Sciences of the U.S.A, outline the challenges to the climate and Bio-diversity.

Answer: A recent paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the U.S.A. shows that global warming during the past half century has contributed to a differential change in income across countries.

Concerns and challenges:

- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services has reported that, worldwide, the abundance of species has reduced by at least one-fifth, about a million species are under threat of extinction in the next few decades and 85% of wetlands have been lost.
- There are numerous instances of elite networks that are taking advantage of the situation to consolidate their control. These networks often involve governments actively or quiescently colluding with fossil fuel companies, agro-industrial elites, financial elites and other big businesses that are ignoring climate change and making a fast buck often even from the growing disasters.
- The Arctic is melting rapidly and the tenor of the recent discussions among Arctic countries suggests that even as increasing glacier melt is responsible for opening up shipping in the area, superpowers are angling to access wealth from the oil, gas, uranium and precious metals in the region.
- Policies and commitments make it clear that most governments and businesses are not interested in dealing with the climate and ecological crises. They will certainly not give these the central attention they deserve in these times of an emergency; they barely even acknowledge them.
- The atmosphere now has concentrations of over 415 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide, compared to 280 ppm in pre-industrial times.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

1. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN)?
 1. It is an Indian Public health, Nutrition and Translational research center located in New Delhi
 2. It was founded by Sir Robert McCarrison in the year 1918 as 'Beri-Beri' Enquiry Unit.
 3. It identifies various nutrition deficiency disorders prevalent among different segments of the population.Select the correct answers using codes given below
(a) 1 and 3 (b) 1 and 2
(c) 2 and 3 (d) All of the above
2. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Project 'SPARROW'?
 1. It was launched by the RBI for the online writing of Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APARs) of its officers.
 2. SPARROW stands for Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window.Select the correct answers using codes given below
(a) 1 only (b) **2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index?
 1. It is published by the WTO.
 2. It has been introduced in 2019 to help in identifying which policy measures restrict trade.Select the correct answers using codes given below
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) **Neither 1 nor 2**
4. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Economic Census- 2019?
 1. It is the 9th Census in 2019 after it was introduced in the year 1976.
 2. It is conducted by the CSO.
 3. It covers all the entrepreneurial units in the country which are involved in any economic activities of either agricultural or non-agricultural sectors.Select the correct answers using codes given below
(a) 1 and 3 (b) 1 and 2
(c) 2 and 3 (d) All of the above
5. Consider the following statements w.r.t the 'Payment and Settlement Systems in India: Vision 2019 – 2021' document.
 1. It was recently released by the RBI.
 2. The main agenda of the vision document is the 'no-compromise' approach towards safety and security of payment systems.Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Which of the following organizations confer the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction?
 - (a) **United Nations**
 - (b) International Labour Organisation
 - (c) SAARC
 - (d) World Bank
7. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the multilateral climate funds?
 1. Global environment facility (GEF) established as financial mechanism of UNICCC in 2011.
 2. Green climate fund (GCF) is financial mechanism of biodiversity and climate change convention in 1992 for helping developed countries.
 3. Clean technology fund is first largest multilateral climate funds.Select the correct answer from the codes given below
(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) None of the above
8. Consider the following statements w.r.t Artemis Mission.
 1. It is the name of the NASA's next mission to the Moon.
 2. NASA plans for the first woman on the lunar surface in 2024 in this ambitious plan.Which of the above statements is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2