

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**WHO launches its first guidelines on self-care interventions for health**

The WHO has launched its first guidelines on self-care interventions for health. This is in response to an estimate that by 2035 the world will face a shortage of nearly 13 million healthcare workers. Currently at least 400 million people worldwide lack access to the most essential health services.

What is Self-Care?

- Explaining what self-care means, the WHO says that it is the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider.
- Self-care interventions represent a significant push towards new and greater self-efficacy, autonomy and engagement in health for self-careers and caregivers.
- WHO noted that self-care is also a means for people who are negatively affected by gender, political, cultural and power dynamics, including those who are forcibly displaced, to have access to sexual and reproductive health services, as many people are unable to make decisions around sexuality and reproduction.

About the guidelines

- In its first volume, the guidelines focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Some of the interventions include self-sampling for human papillomavirus (HPV) and sexually transmitted infections, self-injectable contraceptives, home-based ovulation predictor kits, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) self-testing and self-management of medical abortion.
- These guidelines look at the scientific evidence for health benefits of certain interventions that can be done outside the conventional sector, although sometimes with the support of a health-care provider.
- They do not replace high-quality health services nor are they a shortcut to achieving universal health coverage.

Autonomy and engagement

- It adds that self-care interventions represent a significant push towards new and greater self-efficacy, autonomy and engagement in health for self-careers and caregivers.
- People are increasingly active participants in their own health care and have a right to a greater choice of interventions that meets their needs across their lifetime, but also should be able to access, control, and have affordable options to manage their health and well-being.
- The guidelines, meanwhile, will be expanded to include other self-care interventions, including for prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases.
- WHO is establishing a community of practice for self-care, and will be promoting research and dialogue in this area during the self-care month between June 24 and July 24.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**A thumbs down to unilateralism**

Economic relations between India and the United States are on a knife-edge after the U.S. took a series of unilateral actions against India's exports, that began in 2018, followed by India's recently announced retaliatory move of increasing tariffs on 28 products imported from its largest trade partner. As a result of these developments, India has become the Trump administration's most significant target after China.

Background: The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and the United States International Trade Commission (USITC) — have "investigated" India's trade policies, the conclusions of which have been used by the administration to demand changes in policies that would benefit American businesses.

Propriety and procedures

- It is important to mention here that all of India's trade-related policies (which include intellectual property rights that were investigated and questioned in the two USITC reports were done under the cover of the U.S.'s domestic laws.
- This is tantamount to unilateralism, the response to which should be an unequivocal "no" in this age of multilateralism.
- Propriety and global trade rules demanded that the concerns of American businesses about India's policies had to be addressed within the WTO through consultations among the members.

Flawed step

- The fact that the U.S. is not approaching the WTO to challenge India's trade and investment policies that American businesses find detrimental to their interests implies the following:
- India's largest trade partner is acting in defiance of agreed rules to target India's WTO-consistent policies.
- Take, for instance, India's high tariffs which have left Mr. Trump greatly perturbed.
- These tariffs were agreed to in the Uruguay Round negotiations in consultation with all members of the organisation.
- Moreover, in the period since, India has lowered tariffs on many agricultural and industrial products.

- Contrast this with the U.S.'s position wherein it continues to defend its high levels of agricultural subsidies which are used for lowering commodity prices to levels at which no other country can have access to its domestic market.
- Thus, the U.S. does not need tariffs to protect its agriculture; it uses subsidies, instead.
- The WTO also informs us that the U.S. also uses very high tariffs on tobacco (350%), peanut (164%) and some dairy products (118%).

Conclusion

- The India-U.S. discord over trade stems from a deep-seated desire of U.S. businesses to have a bigger footprint in the Indian economy, and to achieve this goal, the administration is stepping beyond legitimate means.
- This discord defies Mr. Pompeo's simplistic formulation that "great friends are bound to have disagreements".
- In fact, the basis of the discord lies in the way the U.S. has been targeting India's policies, disregarding the rule of law.

Way Forward

- Early resolution of this discord seems difficult as the U.S. has decided to undermine the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism and walk down the path of unilateralism instead.
- Under these circumstances, the Government of India would have focus on two fronts: to remain engaged with its largest trade partner and to also engage actively with the global community to make the U.S. understand the imperatives of a rules-based trading system.

Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue

The term Indo-Pacific has been gaining traction in Indian policy circles for some time now, it achieved operational clarity after the Indian vision was presented by Prime Minister in his keynote address at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2018.

What is it?: Geographically, the Indo-Pacific refers to the Indian and the Pacific Oceans between the east coast of Africa and the American west coast and their several littoral countries. As a term to denote an economic and strategic community, it has been in use among scholars of international relations and geopolitics since the first decade of this century, around the same time as China's rise.

Mechanisms for India to integrate with Indo-Pacific Policy:

- India's Act East policy remains the bedrock of the national Indo-Pacific vision and the centrality of ASEAN is embedded in the Indian narrative.
- India has been an active participant in mechanisms like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- India has also been convening the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, in which the navies of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) participate.
- India has boosted its engagements with Australia and New Zealand and has deepened its cooperation with the Republic of Korea.
- Through the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation, India is stepping up its interactions with the Pacific Island countries.
- India views the Indo-Pacific as a geographic and strategic expanse, with the 10 ASEAN countries connecting the two great oceans.

Challenges ahead for Indo-Pacific regional policy:

- The integration of the IORA means that attention will continue to be focused on the IOR. This can be a result of the growing Chinese footprint in the Indian Ocean and Chinese diplomacy in the region.
- There are still challenges for India, especially how it will integrate the Quadrilateral initiative which got revived in 2017 with its larger Indo-Pacific approach.
- There are differences between India's vision and the U.S.'s strategy for the Indo-Pacific even as countries like China and Russia view the Indo-Pacific with suspicion.

Efforts by the US: The renaming of the U.S. Pacific Command to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command as well as the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act in December 2018 showcase Washington's more serious engagement with the Indo-Pacific.

INDIAN ECONOMY

National Warehousing Grid

The government is likely to introduce warehousing schemes at village and National level to build an efficient storage infrastructure. A National Warehousing Grid along the National Highways may also be introduced in the Budget.

National Warehousing Grid

- The Centre's scheme aims at broad integration of the warehousing capacities in India.
- Approximately 90% of the warehousing space is controlled by unorganised players, with small warehouses of less than 10,000 sq ft area.

- An action plan has already been approved by the Centre on sectoral basis for the construction of steel silos with a capacity of 100 lakh metric tonnes in PPP mode for modernizing storage infrastructure and improving shelf life of stored food grains.

Why need such scheme?

- Practically, much of the country's warehousing capacity outside of the agri sector is in the unorganised sector, with small warehouses of less than 10,000 sq ft area.
- Currently, of the total warehousing space of about 180 million sq ft in the country, the industrial segment accounts for about 86% and the agricultural sector the rest 14%, according to NITI statistics.
- Two-thirds of the warehousing capacity in the food storage segment is owned by the public sector.
- Apart from conventional storing services, India's warehousing capacity is increasingly being used to offer value-added services such as the consolidation and breaking up of cargo, packaging, labelling, bar coding and reverse logistics.

Plugging deficiencies

- The project is aimed at plugging deficiencies given that India's current cold storage capacity at 25 MT is barely sufficient for 10% of the fruits and vegetables produced in the country.
- The lack of adequate storage infrastructure is an important reason for the high cost of food products and wastage.
- Nearly 60% of the modern warehousing capacity in India is concentrated in top six cities, namely Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi-NCR and Pune, with Hyderabad and Kolkata being the other major markets, according to Care Ratings.
- This trend is driven by the concentration of industrial activity and presence of sizeable urban population around these clusters.

Beneficiaries

- The prime beneficiaries of the new wave of growth in warehousing include peripheral locations of Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities.
- Much of the fresh investments would go into creating storage facilities for retail and consumer goods.

Forthcoming challenges

The primary challenge that India's warehousing market currently faces is acquisition of a feasible land parcel, given that land cost constitutes the largest component of a warehousing project. While rental values that a warehouse owner can charge are primarily driven by demand and supply factors, land prices are inherently dependent on multiple factors like development control regulations, infrastructure development and the best alternative usage of land.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC

NASA's PUNCH mission

NASA has selected an US based Indian researcher to lead its PUNCH mission which will image the Sun.

About PUNCH Mission

- PUNCH stands for "Polarimeter to Unify the Corona and Heliosphere," is focused on understanding the transition of particles from the Sun's outer corona to the solar wind that fills interplanetary space.
- It will consist of a constellation of four microsatellites that through continuous 3D deep-field imaging, will observe the corona and heliosphere as elements of a single, connected system.
- This is a landmark mission will image regions beyond the Sun's outer corona.
- The Sun and the solar wind are one interconnected system, but these have until recently been studied using entirely different technologies and scientific approaches.

Why such mission?

- Other missions such as NASA's Parker Solar Probe and the ESA-NASA joint project, Solar Orbiter, which is due to be launched in 2020, can study the structures of the Sun's atmosphere.
- The PUNCH mission enhances these by tracking these structures in real time.
- Since the Sun's corona is much fainter than its surface layers, it cannot be viewed by the instruments directly.
- So PUNCH will block out the light from the Sun to view its corona and the structures in it.

Constellation of satellites

- PUNCH will consist of a 'constellation' of four suitcase-sized microsats that will orbit the Earth in formation and study how the corona, which is the atmosphere of the Sun, connects with the interplanetary medium.
- The mission is expected to be launched in 2022.
- The mission will image and track the solar wind and also the coronal mass ejections – which are huge masses of plasma that get thrown out of the Sun's atmosphere.
- The coronal mass ejections can affect and drive space weather events near the Earth.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Keep Calm and Study Hard.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: What are the mechanisms for India to integrate with Indo-Pacific Policy.

Critically Examine the challenges lies for India in the region.

Ans: The Indo-Pacific refers to the Indian and the Pacific Oceans between the east coast of Africa and the American west coast and their several littoral countries. As a term to denote an economic and strategic community, it has been in use among scholars of international relations and geopolitics since the first decade of this century, around the same time as China's rise.

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