

GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS

- **In News:** The World Health Organization (WHO) released a report highlighting benefits of the 'Har Ghar Jal' programme in India.
- **About:** The Har Ghar Jal Programme was launched in 2019 under the Jal Jeevan Mission and is implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- **Objective:** The program aims to provide every rural household with a fully functional tap water connection by 2024.
- A fully functional tap water connection is defined as a household getting at least 55 litres of per capita per day of potable water all through the year.
- **Significance:** The program's components are aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators -
 - ✓ Indicator 6.1.1: proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services.
 - ✓ Indicator 3.9.2: mortality related to unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- **Achievements under programme:** Five States – Goa, Telangana and Haryana, Gujarat and Punjab and three Union Territories — Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Daman Diu & Dadra Nagar Haveli and Puducherry have reported 100% coverage.
- Burhanpur district in Madhya Pradesh has become the first 'Har Ghar Jal' certified district in the country.
- **Findings of WHO report:** The 'Har Ghar Jal' report focuses on diarrheal diseases as they contribute significantly to the overall disease burden related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) issues.
- Currently about 12.3 crore rural households, or 62%, have piped water connections up from 3.2 crore or about 16.6% from 2019 when the scheme was launched.
- The report estimates that ensuring safely managed drinking water for all households in the country could avert nearly 400,000 deaths caused by diarrheal diseases.
- Additionally, this would avoid 14 million DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years) from diarrhoea and save around \$101 billion.
- It has saved the time and efforts of women of 66.6 million hours every day that would otherwise have been spent collecting water.
- Also investing in water and sanitation results in many benefits, including economic, environmental, quality of life, and health. Every dollar invested in sanitation interventions gives a \$4.3 return in the form of reduced health care costs.

DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years)

- DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years) represents the loss of the equivalent of one year of full health and are a way to account for the years of life lost due to premature mortality (YLLs) and the years lived with a disability (YLDs), due to prevalent cases of a disease or a health condition, in a population.

Diarrhoeal disease

- Diarrhoea is defined as the passage of three or more loose or liquid stools per day (or more frequent passage than is normal for the individual). It is usually a symptom of an infection in the intestinal tract, which can be caused by a variety of bacterial, viral and parasitic organisms.

Common causes: E.coli, Salmonella (bacteria), Rotavirus (virus), Giardia, Cryptosporidium (parasites).

Transmission: Infection is spread through contaminated food or drinking-water, or from person-to-person as a result of poor hygiene.

There are three clinical types of diarrhoea:

- ✓ Acute watery diarrhoea – lasts several hours or days, and includes cholera;
- ✓ Acute bloody diarrhoea – also called dysentery; and
- ✓ Persistent diarrhoea – lasts 14 days or longer.

Prevention: safe drinking-water, use of improved sanitation and hand washing with soap can reduce disease risk.

Treatment: Diarrhoea should be treated with oral rehydration solution (ORS), a solution of clean water, sugar and salt. In addition, zinc tablets and nutrient rich food shortens diarrhoea duration and improves outcomes.

Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight

- It was launched in 2014 by the centre with the aim of 'zero child deaths due to childhood diarrhoea'.
- During the fortnight health workers visit the households of under five children to increase awareness about the use of ORS and Zinc in diarrhea.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY/INTERNAL SECURITY

In Context The possibility of the use of weaponised drones for terrorist activities in the present scenario calls for serious attention from the global community.

The Drone Threat

- The potential use of drones in a terrorist incident or attack against critical infrastructure and soft targets is a growing concern for law enforcement as the availability of drone technology becomes more widespread globally.
- As drones become less expensive and their potential applications continue to expand, it is expected that countries will witness an increase and evolution of this threat.
- Recent examples include terrorist groups using drones in surveillance activities and delivering chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive materials in conflict zones, and an environmental group that

repurposed a hobby drone to enter the secure airspace of a nuclear site and crash into a building highlighted the current reality of the threat posed by the illicit use of drones.

Issues and Challenges in Countering it

- A drone can inflict unacceptable damage, not only in physical terms but also in terms of national pride.
- Its occurrence is more likely and unpredictable and Even an attempt goes undetected.
- The use of missiles against drones is expensive and the drones may not provide enough heat signatures for relatively cost-effective heat-seeking missiles defeating the cost advantage.
- Handheld guns have very limited range and accuracy.
- Electro-Optical/Infrared (EO/IR) devices, apart from having a limited Field of View under high magnification necessary for identification, are adversely affected by atmospheric obscurities and emissivity.
- Wide-band detectors are possible but finding the exact frequency of operation would be time-consuming and cumbersome.
- Passive Radio Frequency (RF) detection needs multiple sensors at different places to obtain a fix and the problem gets compounded if the target is a moving platform.
- The introduction of 5G has added another dimension where communication is not dependent on the direct link between the drone and the operator.
 - 5G utilises higher radio frequencies to transfer more data over the air for faster speed, reduced congestion and lower latency, and most important Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLS).
- Satcom connectivity, which was earlier available only to military-grade drones, is now likely to be available commercially, enabling the drones but compounding the problem for counter-drone operations.

Counter Drone Efforts

- Globally: The USA established Joint C-UAS Office (JCO) in 2019 with the purpose “to lead, synchronize, and direct C-sUAS (Countering small Unmanned Aircraft System) activities by looking at doctrine, requirements, materiel, training standards, and capabilities to establish joint solutions with a common architecture to address current and future emerging sUAS threats.
 - ✓ In the UK, the National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) coordinates with the counter-drone unit of the home office and other government agencies to maximise efficiency and minimise confusion in implementing credible anti-drone solutions.
 - ✓ The NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCI Agency) conducted NATO's Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) Technical Interoperability Exercise 2022 (TIE22) in the Netherlands in 2022.
 - ✓ A similar exercise was carried out by Interpol with over 300 participants from more than 50 countries.
 - ✓ Drone catchers have also emerged as an option.
 - Ukraine's Minister of Digital Transformation has confirmed that the country has received the first six interceptors 'Shahed catchers' from the US.

Developments in India

- India has a well-articulated Drone Policy 2021 that is updated on a regular basis, but an anti-drone policy is still being developed.
- In India, as per a report in the Government Economic Times Centre for High Energy Systems and Sciences (CHESS) a DRDO laboratory in Hyderabad has been experimenting with the DEW technology development that includes DURGA II (Directionally Unrestricted Ray-Gun Array), a 100 KW lightweight DEW system.
- India has already had an experience with its Herons and Searchers procured by the three services that were not interoperable.
 - ✓ A national-level strategy will overcome such issues.
- The DRDO has developed an anti-drone technology for short ranges, which was deployed for Prime Minister's security during the Independence Day address.

Way Forward

- India must formulate a counter-drone strategy involving all stakeholders.
- The counter-drone strategy must provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolving risks posed by the malicious and illegal use of drones, as well as take a 'full spectrum approach to deter, detect, and disrupt drone misuse.
- It must provide access to counter-drone capabilities as well as effective legislation, training, and guidance to operational responders.
- It must aid in the development of strong relationships with the industry in order to ensure that its products meet the highest standards.
- Counter drone strategy will act as a deterrent and like a good deterrent, will prevent the undesirable occurrence without even coming into play – the only requirement is its credibility.
- Many options of net catchers are available in the market but a system must be fully autonomous, capable of day/night operations with advanced AI/ML algorithms.

PRELIM FACTS

1. Akhand Bharat

- **Context:** The newly-built Parliament building has a mural that shows the map of ancient India.

Key details

- The mural depicts an undivided India (Akhand Bharat) whose geographical area includes present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and India.
- Three of India's neighbours, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh, have objected to the mural.
- The Government of India has clarified that the map is of the ancient Ashokan Empire.
- The accompanying Ashokan rock edict is from Maski in Raichur, and the sculpture of Ashoka from Sannati in Kalburgi, both in Karnataka.

The Maski edict:

- Maski is a town and an archaeological site in Karnataka.
- It lies on the bank of the Maski river which is a tributary of the Tungabhadra.
- The site came into prominence with the discovery of a minor rock edict of Emperor Ashoka by C. Beadon in 1915.
- It was the first edict of Emperor Ashoka that contained the name Ashoka in it instead of the earlier edicts that referred him as Devanampiyevadasi.
- Many edicts found earlier in the Indian sub-continent in the name of Devanampiyevadasi, all belonged to Emperor Ashoka.
- The edict is etched on a rock-face of Durgada-gudda, one of the gneissic outcrops that are present in the site.

The Sannati sculpture of Ashoka:

- Sannati, a small village on the banks of the river Bhima in Kalaburagi, Karnataka.
- It came into prominence after the collapse of the roof of the Kali temple in Chandralamba temple complex in 1986.
- The collapse revealed the historically valuable Ashokan edicts written in Prakrit language and Brahmi script at the foundations of the temple
- It led to the discovery of the magnificent Maha Stupa at Kanaganahalli, which had been referred to as Adholoka Maha-Chaitya (The Great Stupa of the Netherworlds) in the inscriptions.
- More importantly, a sculpture-portrait of Ashoka seated on his throne with his queens was also discovered.
- The discovery of the first inscribed portrait of Emperor Ashoka, named Raya Ashoka, was discovered in the stupa.
- It has also shed light on his forays into South India.
- While Ashoka's empire extended deep into the south, there is still no definitive proof of Ashoka's sojourn here.

2. World Food Programme

- **News:** The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has temporarily suspended food aid to Ethiopia because its supplies are being diverted to the Ethiopian military.

About:

- **Status:** The World Food Programme (WFP) is an international organisation within the United Nations (UN). Its Parent organisation is the UN General Assembly.
- **Mandate:** It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation that provides food assistance worldwide. It aims to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 which is about creating a world free of hunger by 2030.
- **Background:** It was established In 1961 after the 1960 Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Conference. It launched its First development programme in Sudan in 1963.
- **Headquarters:** Rome, Italy.
- **Award:** WFP was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2020 for its efforts to provide food assistance in areas of conflict.
- **Hunger Hotspots:** This report is jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Governance:

- **Executive Board:** It is the supreme governing body of WFP. It comprises 36 States Members of the UN or Member Nations of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- **Executive Directors:** WFP is headed by an executive director, who is appointed jointly by the UN Secretary-General and the director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Sushil Dev of India served as the acting Executive Director of WFP in 1968.

3. Nutri Garden Project in Lakshadweep

- **Context:** Prime Minister of India has praised the results of the Nutri Garden Project in Lakshadweep.

Key details:

- The project was launched in the island archipelago under the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' initiative in 2022.
- In this project 1,000 farmers were provided with vegetable seeds.
- As a successful result of this programme, the supply of vegetables in the region has increased.
- To make the island archipelago self-reliant in production and supply of vegetables, seeds of okra, tomato, brinjal, chilli, amaranthus etc and grow bags and organic fertilizers were distributed to 1,000 farmers selected from the various islands.

- Over 8,000 fruit saplings of various varieties and spices saplings were also provided to them.

Significance:

- Supply of fresh vegetables in Lakshadweep has increased for ensuring nutritional security of the local population.
- The programme has been a huge success resulting in increased supply of fresh vegetables/fruits to the islanders and income guarantee to the farmers.

4. Ram Prasad Bismil

Context: 126th birth anniversary of Ram Prasad Bismil was commemorated recently.

Key details about his life:

❖ **Early life:**

- ✓ He was born into a Rajput Tomar family.
- ✓ Ram Prasad Bismil learnt Hindi from his father and Urdu from a maulvi who lived nearby.
- ✓ He also went to an English medium school.
- ✓ He joined the Arya Samaj and became a prolific writer and poet, penning patriotic verses in Hindi and Urdu under pen names like 'Agyat', 'Ram', and the one that is most known – 'Bismil' (meaning 'wounded', 'restless').
- ✓ At the age of only 18, he penned the poem Mera Janm (My Birth), venting out his anger over the death sentence handed out to Arya Samaj missionary Bhai Parmanand.

❖ **The Mainpuri Conspiracy**

- ✓ Bismil was not willing to "negotiate" or "beg" for his country's freedom.
- ✓ If the British did not accede, he was willing to take it by force, as one of his most famous poems, Ghulami Mita Do illustrates.
- ✓ To achieve his ends, he started a revolutionary organisation called Matrivedi (The Altar of the Motherland) and joined forces with fellow revolutionary Genda Lal Dixit.
- ✓ In 1918, Bismil wrote arguably his most famous poem, Mainpuri ki Pratigya, which was distributed across the United Provinces in pamphlets.
- ✓ That year, in order to collect funds for his fledgling organisation, he carried out at least three instances of looting at government offices in Mainpuri district.

❖ **Founding the Hindustan Republican Association**

- ✓ He released a collection of poems called Man ki Lahar and also translated works such as Bolshevikon ki Kartoot (from Bengali).
- ✓ He initially worked gathering support for the Congress-led Non-Cooperation Movement but after Gandhi called it off post the incident at Chauri Chaura in 1922, Bismil decided to start his own party.
- ✓ Thus the Hindustan Republican Association was formed with Bismil, Ashfaqullah Khan, Sachindra Nath Bakshi and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee as founding members.
- ✓ Figures such as Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh would also later join the HRA.
- ✓ Their manifesto, largely penned down by Bismil, was officially released on January 1, 1925 and titled Krantikari (Revolutionary).

✓ It proclaimed that the immediate object of the revolutionary party in the domain of politics is to establish a federal Republic of United States of India by an organized and armed revolution.

❖ **The Kakori Train Action**

- ✓ The train robbery at Kakori in August 1925 was HRA's first major action.
- ✓ Revolutionaries planned to rob the train between Shahjahanpur and Lucknow, which often carried treasury bags meant to be deposited in the British treasury in Lucknow.
- ✓ On August 9, 1925, as the train was passing the Kakori station, about 15 km from Lucknow, Rajendranath Lahiri, a member of the HRA who was already seated inside, pulled the chain and stopped the train.
- ✓ Subsequently, around ten revolutionaries, including Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqullah Khan, entered the train and overpowered the guard.
- ✓ They looted the treasury bags (containing approx Rs 4,600) and escaped to Lucknow.
- ✓ Due to a misfiring Mauser gun, one passenger (a lawyer named Ahmad Ali) was killed during the robbery.

❖ **Death and legacy**

- ✓ After an eighteen month long trial, Bismil, Ashfaqullah and Rajendranath Lahiri were sentenced to death.
- ✓ The sentence was carried out on December 19, 1927.

5. Captagon pills

- **Context:** As global isolation of Syria's President Bashar al-Assad comes to an end with the Arab League reinstating Syria as its member, the discussions on the trade of Captagon pills have taken the centre-stage once again.

What is captagon?

- Captagon is a highly addictive amphetamine-type drug. It is produced mainly in Syria and widely smuggled across West Asia. They were manufactured to help treat attention deficit disorders, narcolepsy and other conditions.

What do amphetamine-based drugs do?

- It stimulates the central nervous system, providing a boost of energy, enhances someone's focus, lets someone stay awake for longer periods of time, and produces a feeling of euphoria.
- Captagon or other amphetamine-type drugs usually stay in the blood for around 36 hours.
- When taken orally, their peak effect occurs one to three hours after consumption, and effects last for as long as seven to 12 hours.

Side effects

- ✓ Consumption of amphetamines can cause:
 - ✓ loss of appetite and weight,
 - ✓ Heart problems such as fast heart rate, irregular heartbeat, increased blood pressure, and heart attack, which can lead to death.
 - ✓ high body temperature,
 - ✓ skin flushing,
 - ✓ memory loss,
 - ✓ Problems thinking clearly and stroke.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Assess the significance of French Revolution on the World stage. How did it change the course of Modern history? (250 words)

The French Revolution was a period of radical social and political upheaval in France from 1789 to 1799. It was characterized by significant changes in the country's political, social, and economic systems, as well as profound cultural and intellectual transformations. The revolution had a profound impact not only on France but also on the rest of Europe and the world, inspiring other movements for liberty, equality, and democracy.

Significance of French Revolution:

- Spreading of Revolutionary Ideals:

The French Revolution inspired revolutionary movements across Europe and the Americas, spreading the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

It challenged the existing political systems of monarchies and aristocracies and advocated for representative government and constitutional rights.

- Emergence of nationalism:

The French Revolution led to the emergence of nationalism as a powerful political force.

It united the French people under a common cause and a shared sense of national identity, which eventually led to the formation of the modern French nation-state.

- Redefining of international relations:

The French Revolution challenged the traditional power structure of Europe, leading to wars and conflicts that reshaped the continent.

It also led to the formation of the Congress of Vienna, which aimed to restore the balance of power and stability in Europe.

- Promotion of human rights:

The French Revolution promoted the concept of human rights, which became a cornerstone of modern democracy.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, adopted during the Revolution, established the principle of individual rights and freedoms.

Change in course of Modern History after French Revolution -

- Marked the End of the Old Order:

The French Revolution was a decisive break with the old political and social order in Europe.

The old regime, which was based on feudalism, absolute monarchy, and the privileges of the nobility and clergy, was swept away by the revolutionary forces.

The revolutionaries proclaimed the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and established a new democratic republic.

- Inspired Other Revolutions:

The French Revolution had a profound impact on the rest of Europe and the world. It inspired other revolutionary movements, such as the Haitian Revolution, the Latin American Wars of Independence, and the European revolutions of 1848.

The ideas of the French Revolution also influenced the development of modern democracy, nationalism, and human rights.

- Established New Political Institutions:

The French Revolution established new political institutions that were based on the principles of popular sovereignty and representative government.

The National Assembly, the Convention, and the Directory were all products of the revolutionary period.

The Napoleonic era that followed the revolution also saw the development of new institutions, such as the prefecture, the code civil, and the Legion of Honor.

- Led to Wars and Conflicts:

The French Revolutionary Wars were a series of wars fought by France against a coalition of European powers.

These wars resulted in the expansion of the French Empire, the spread of revolutionary ideals, and the destabilization of the European balance of power.

Conclusion

The French Revolution was a watershed moment in modern history, which had far-reaching consequences on the world stage. It inspired revolutionary movements, promoted nationalism, challenged traditional power structures, and promoted the ideals of human rights and democracy. Its legacy can still be seen today in the political and social systems of many countries.

MCQs

- Consider the following statement about Nutri Garden Project in Lakshadweep.
 - The project was launched in the island archipelago under the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' initiative in 2022.
 - The programme has been a huge success resulting in increased supply of fresh vegetables/fruits to the islanders and income guarantee to the farmers.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2** (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Operation Amanat', recently seen in the news, is a novel initiative of which one of the following agencies?
 - Indian Army
 - Border Security Force (BSF)
 - Railway Protection Force (RPF)**
 - Indian Navy
- Which one of the following is the best description of 'Betelgeuse', that was in the news recently?
 - It is a synthetic fibre.
 - It is a red supergiant star.**
 - It is a newly discovered butterfly species.
 - It is a supermassive blackhole.
- Consider the following statements regarding the Sagar Samridhi system:
 - It is an online dredging monitoring system.
 - This system has been developed by National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways and Coasts (NTCPWC).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) Only 1 b) Only 2
c) **Both 1 and 2** d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Considered the following statement regarding Maski .
 - Maski is a town and an archaeological site in Karnataka.
 - The site came into prominence with the discovery of a minor rock edict of Emperor Ashoka by C. Beadon in 1915.
 - It was the first edict of Emperor Ashoka that contained the name Ashoka in it instead of the earlier edicts that referred him as Devanampiyetiya.

How many above statement is/ are correct?
a) Only 1 pair b) Only 2 pair
c) **Only 3 pair** d) None
- Considered the following statement regarding Nutri Garden Project.
 - Nutri Garden Project in Lakshadweep.
 - The project was launched in the island archipelago under the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' initiative in 2022.
 - In this project 1,000 farmers were provided with vegetable seeds.
How many above statements is/ are correct?
a) Only 1 pair b) Only 2 pair
c) **Only 3 pair** d) None
- Consider the following statements regarding Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS):
 - These are village-level cooperative credit societies that serve as the last link in a three-tier cooperative credit structure.
 - The main function of the PACS is to provide long-term purpose loans to its members.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) **1 only** b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements regarding iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence):
 - It is the flagship initiative of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to achieve self-reliance and foster innovation in Defence and Aerospace sector.
 - Under iDEX, financial support is provided only to Start-ups and MSMEs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) **1 only** b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2
- With reference to the Gulabi meenakari handicrafts, consider the following statements:
 - It is an art form which was brought to India during the period of Delhi sultanate .
 - This art work is done by using tools like salai, kalam and takala.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 only b) **2 only**
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements about 'First Loss Default Guarantee':
 - It is an arrangement whereby a third party such as a financial technology (fintech) player (LSP) compensates lenders if the borrower defaults.
 - The Reserve Bank of India has allowed default loss guarantees in digital lending.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) **Both 1 and 2** d) Neither 1 nor 2