



PLUTUS ACADEMY

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1. Mukhya Mantri Kisan Kalyan Yojana to be Launched in Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh government is going to launch the ‘Mukhya Mantri Kisan Kalyan Yojana’ by following the path of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi which is an initiative of the central government.

Highlights

- Existing beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi who are getting Rs. 6,000 per annum, will also be getting additional financial assistance of Rs. 4,000 under the announced scheme. Thus, in total, the farmers would be getting annual assistance to be Rs. 10,000.
- Around 80 lakh farmers will be benefited from the announced Chief Minister Kisan Kalyan Yojana.
- The state government also plans to integrate the farmer-friendly schemes.
- This announcement was made in the Sabko sakh- Sabka Vikas program that was attended by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Sabko Sakh- Sabka Vikas Program

Sabko Sakh-Sabka Vikas Program was organised under the Garib Kalyan Week in Bhopal on September 22, 2020. The Chief Minister of the state addressed the programme and deposited Rs. 800 crores in the accounts of the cooperative banks and societies. He also disbursed the credit cards and loans to the farmers. Kisan Credit Cards were also provided by the chief minister to 63,000 beneficiaries. Further, a loan of Rs. 122 crores were given to 35,532 farmers by cooperative societies.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sammann Nidhi

It is an initiative of the Indian government announced by the Union Minister Piyush Goyal during the interim Union Budget of India, 2019. It came into effect in December 2019. It provides all the farmers up to Rs. 6000 per year in three installments as minimum income support. The support money is directly transferred to the farmer's bank accounts. The total cost of the scheme is Rs. 75,000 crores per annum.

2.India-Australia two-day Naval Exercise in the Indian Ocean- Key Facts and Significance.

Indian Navy and the Australia navy will be conducting a two-days mega naval exercise in the Indian Ocean commencing from September 23, 2020. This will include various anti-aircraft drills, complex naval maneuvers, and helicopter operations.

India-Australia Naval Exercise

- The exercise involves advanced surface and anti-air exercises.
- It also includes seamanship exercises, weapon firings, cross-deck flying operations, and naval manoeuvres.
- HMAS Hobart will be deployed in the exercise by the Royal Australian Navy. It is a lead-ship of the Hobart-class air warfare destroyers.
- From Indian side, Karmuk and Sahyadri ships will be a part of the exercise.

Significance

- The naval exercise aims to improve the understanding, enhance the interoperability, and share the best practices from each other.
- Earlier, Indian Navy conducted similar exercises with Japan, Russia and The US.
- This is the fourth major drill by the Indian Navy since June 2020 in the Indian Ocean.
- The exercise can be seen as counter to the India's rising border tension with China and presence of Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean Region.
- It is a step towards strengthening the Indo-Australia Defence Relations.
- This will bring both the governments to work closely in order to enhance the safety and security of the global commons.

Recent Exercises in the Indian Ocean Region

1. In June 2020, Naval exercise was conducted between Indian Navy and the Japanese Navy (Japan Maritime Self Defense Force).

2. In July 2020, Indian Navy conducted a military exercise with a US Navy carrier strike group. It was led by the Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (world's largest warship) along the coast of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
3. In September 2020, Indian and Russia Navies carried out an exercise in the Bay of Bengal.

3. Why Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020 is being Opposed?

The Lok Sabha passed the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020 on September 23, 2020. Under the bill Dogri, Kashmiri, and Hindi will be the official languages in the Union territory of J&K besides Urdu and English. The bill was passed by the voice vote despite opposition.

Why is the bill being opposed?

- Gujjar and Sikh communities protested the exclusion of Gojri and Punjabi languages from the bill stating that it is an anti-minority move.
- Party in opposition stating that the central government does not have legislative competence to frame the bill with respect to the language.
- Further, only 0.16% population of the UT speaks Urdu which link the Jammu and Kashmir region.
- There is an argument that, No other state has five official languages.
- It was the 131-year-old status of Urdu as the sole official language of the region.
- People will start demanding for inclusion of more languages as the official language.

Highlights

- The bill makes five languages including the Urdu, Hindi, Kashmiri, Dogri and English, the official language of the region.
- This was a pending public demand of the region since long.
- It is developing the spirit of equality that triggered in after Jammu and Kashmir was dropped of its statehood and bifurcated it into two Union territories in August 2019 through the J&K Reorganization Act.
- Urdu, Hindi and Dogri also among Eight Schedule Languages.

J&K Reorganisation Act

The Act gave legal mandate to revoke Article 370. The Act was introduced to bifurcate Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

New domicile rules

As per the rules, people belonging to West Pakistan, Valmiki, women marrying outside communities, non-registered Kashmiri migrants and displaced people will get domicile in the region.

Eight Schedule Languages

It is the list of 22 official languages recognized by the Constitution. It includes Assamese, Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Telugu, Sindhi (added by 21st Amendment Act, 1967), Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali (added by 71st Amendment Act, 1992), Maithili, Bodo, Dogri, Santhal (added by 92nd Amendment 2003) as the official languages.

4.Provisions of Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain provisions) Bill

Parliament passed the Taxation and other laws (Relaxation and Amendment of certain provisions) bill, 2020 on September 23, 2020. It replaces the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation of Certain Provisions) Ordinance, 2020 that was promulgated on March 31, 2020. The new bill will make few changes to direct and indirect tax laws including the Income Tax Act, 1961 (IT Act), Finance Acts, the Customs Act, 1962, and the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988. It was passed in Rajya Sabha through voice vote.

Provisions of the Bill

1. The bill extends the deadlines for filing returns and to link PAN and Aadhaar.
2. It has a provision of tax benefits to donations made to PM CARES fund by providing 100 % deduction.
3. The bill also amends Income Tax Act to provide the same treatment to the PM CARES fund as that to the PM National Relief Fund.
4. It also amends the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 in order to allow the central government to notify an extension to the time limits for various GST-related compliances and actions.

Issues with PM CARES Fund

1. **Transparency:** Auditing of the funds and its spending of the fund will be done by an independent auditors and not the Comptroller Audit General. Thus,

the fund lacks transparency over its spending and auditing. This is the transparency issue around PM-CARES fund

- **CSR Funding issue : The PM CARES funds allows corporates to contribute to the corporate social responsibility (CSR) fund which goes against The Section 135 of Companies Act. The section makes it mandatory to spend the CSR Funds for the development of the respective local community in the areas where the corporate is located.**

.5.International Day of Sign Languages is being observed on September 23

International Day of Sign Languages is observed on September 23, 2020 by the United Nations. Theme for the year 2020 is Sign Languages are for Everyone.

Significance of September 23

- **International Day of Sign Languages is observed on September 23 because the World Federation of the Deaf was established on this day.**
- **The World Federation of the Deaf brought the concept of celebrating International Day of Sign Languages.**
- **The first International Day of Sign Languages was celebrated in 2018 along with the International Week of the Deaf.**
- **The International week of the Deaf was first celebrated in 1958 by World Federation of the Deaf.**

World Federation of Deaf data

- **It says, there are more than 72 million deaf people across the world.**
- **80% of the deaf people live in developing countries.**
- **These Deaf people use more than 300 sign languages.**

Goals and Convention dealing with Disabilities

1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal 10 of SDG deals with the prevalence of disability in the world. It aims to reduce inequality between the countries by empowering and promoting social, political and economic inclusion for all including the persons with disabilities. Apart from that, Goal 11 of the SDG is aimed at making human settlements and cities inclusive of all, safe and sustainable.

2. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The convention was adopted in 2006. It recognizes and promotes the use of sign languages and facilitates its learning. The convention has been ratified 177 times so far. Its main aim is to end the discrimination against disabled persons.

Steps take by India

India ratified the convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 was enacted after that to fulfil obligations under United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Government also launched the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan to make public places more accessible to disabled people.

6. Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor to be commissioned in 2022

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Atomic Energy and Space Shri Jitendra Singh said that the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor will be commissioned by October 2022.

About Reactor

- The reactor is being constructed by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI) and the Indira Gandhi centre for Atomic Research (ICGAR)
- Reactor will add 500 MW of power to the national grid once commissioned.
- The reactor is being constructed at Kalpakkam Atomic Power Station in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- The reactor was planned to be commissioned in 2012 but it getting delayed due to technical errors.

Features of the reactor

- The reactor is a pool-type reactor whose cores are immersed in liquid (water).
- The reactor has a negative void coefficient so it provides a high level of nuclear safety.
- The speed of the fission chain reaction decreases automatically when the reactor overheats. This lowers the temperature and power level.
- Liquid Sodium is the coolant in the reactor.

India's three Stage Nuclear Programme

This was initiated by Homi Bhabha by using the thorium and uranium reserves found in Monazite sands of coastal regions of India. The programme runs with an objective to use Thorium reserves in India to meet the energy requirements. The

programme is running successfully the Indo-US Nuclear deal. The three stages in the programme includes,

1. Stage 1- Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor
2. Stage 2- Fast Breeder Reactor
3. Stage 3- Thorium based reactor

Currently, India is in its third stage of the programme.

Thorium reserves in India

Thorium reserves in India accounts for 1%-2% of global Uranium reserves.

7.What are the new guidelines by DGCI on COVID-19 vaccines?

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) issued new guidelines that focuses on safety, immunogenicity and efficacy parameters for pharma companies who are developing COVID-19 vaccines.

Highlight from the guidelines

- The guidelines were framed by CDSCO in line with USFDA and WHO.
- The DCGI said that COVID-19 vaccine candidates should have at least 50 per cent efficacy in the Phase-III clinical trial in order for it to be widely deployed.
- The guidelines also mention that adequate data on the potential risk of vaccine-associated Enhanced Respiratory Disease (ERD) also needs to be generated.
- The Indian Council for Medical Research has approved COVID-19 vaccines with 50-100% efficacy since no respiratory vaccines have 100% efficacy according to ICMR.
- Guidelines highlight that pharma companies should take pregnant and childbearing women into consideration while making the vaccines.

What does WHO say?

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that a vaccine should have three things- safety, efficacy and immunogenicity. It also says that, vaccines with more than 50% efficacy is an accepted vaccine.

Vaccines in India

Three vaccines are undergoing human trials in India including the COVAXIN, Oxford Vaccines and SPUTNIK-V (Russian Vaccine).

World Scenario

More than 169 vaccines are undergoing human trial all across the world. The countries have even made pre-purchase agreements before the final stage human trials of vaccines. According to the WHO, this has led to “Vaccine Nationalism” under which the countries are securing doses of vaccines for their own citizens and prioritising their own domestic markets. However, WHO have taken several steps to stop this including,

1. COVAX

It has been launched by WHO , Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) to prevent vaccine nationalism. It aims to speed up the search for effective vaccines for all countries. The main objective of the initiative is to distribute at least 2 billion doses by the end of 2021 all across the world.

2. Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator

This programme has been launched by the WHO in collaboration with France, European Union and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It aims is to provide equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests, treatments and vaccines for all nations.