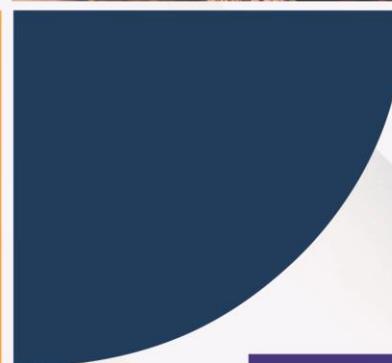
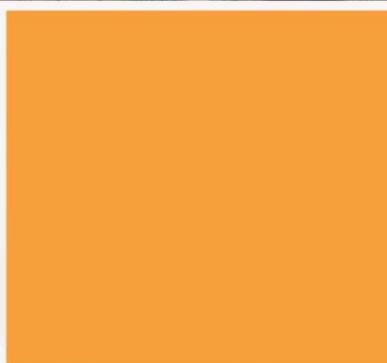




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GENERAL STUDIES - I

Stree Manoraksha Project

Context

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with NIMHANS has recently launched the "Stree Manoraksha project".

Salient feature

- The project is aimed at extending mental health training to 6000 One Stop Centre (OSCs) functionaries across India.
- The project would emphasise on the psychosocial well-being and aim to improve the mental health of women in India.
- The project would focus on capacity building of OSC functionaries on the tools and techniques as to how to handle the cases of women approaching the One Stop Centres particularly the women who have suffered violence and distress with due sensitivity and care.
- The project also focuses on self-care techniques for OSC staff and counsellors.

Aim of the event

- The event has collaborative action at system strengthening, capacity building, improving processes and helping women in difficult circumstances.
- The overall aim of the event was to create an enabling environment for the safety, security and psychological well-being of women.

Collaboration with NIMHANS

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) launched the 'Stree Manoraksha Project' in collaboration with NIMHANS.
- The Training module is meticulously carved out by NIMHANS will aid functionaries in helping distressed women and also provide self-care techniques.

Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women (SAMARTH)

Context

- On the occasion of International Women's Day 2022, The ministry of MSME launched a Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women "SAMARTH".

More about SAMARTH

- The Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women -"SAMARTH" being implemented by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- It aims to provide Women an opportunity to be self-reliant and independent by undertaking self-employment opportunities.

Opportunities for women

- The MSME sector offers great opportunities for women.
- Under the Samarth initiative following benefits will be available to aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs:
- There will be 20% Seats in free Skill Development Programs organised under skill development schemes for Women.
- 20% of MSME Business Delegations sent to domestic & international exhibitions under the schemes for Marketing Assistance will be dedicated to women owned MSMEs.
- Also, there will be 20% Discount on annual processing fee on NCIS's Commercial Schemes
- Special Drive for registration of women-owned MSMEs under Udyam Registration

Jharokha - Compendium of Indian handicraft art and culture

Context

- As part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Textiles had organised "Jharokha-Compendium of Indian handicraft/ handloom, art and culture".

Contribution of women

- Jharokha, the first event in Bhopal celebrates womanhood and the contribution of women in the field of art, craft and culture
- It was organised at Rani Kamlapati Railway Station which is named after the brave and fearless Queen Kamlapati of the Gond kingdom of Madhya Pradesh.
- This was a PAN India celebration held at 16 locations in 13 states and UTs.
- The celebrations at Jharokha include showcasing of handicraft and handloom products from across the country.
- Women artisans, weavers, and artists who have given their significant contribution in promoting and reviving Indian handloom and handicrafts were felicitated in the event.
- A dedicated corner for Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) encompassing the culture and art of Manipur and Nagaland was also set up at.

Nari Shakti Puraskar

Context

- The President of India has conferred the Nari Shakti Puraskar on the International Women's Day i.e 8th March.

About the Award

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has instituted the annual Nari Shakti Puraskar in 1999 to recognise outstanding work in the fields of economic and social empowerment of women.
- Nari Shakti Puraskars shall showcase the Government's commitment towards women with the aim of strengthening their position in the society.
- Nari Shakti Puraskar will also provide an opportunity to Young Indians to understand the contribution of women in building society and the nation.
- The award carries a cash award of Rs.2 Lakh and a certificate for individuals and institutions.

Objectives

- The Nari Shakti Puraskars forecast the Government's commitment towards women with the aim of strengthening their legitimate place in the society.
- It also provides an opportunity to the current generation to understand the contribution of women in building society and the nation.

5th Edition of Women Transforming India Awards

Context

- NITI Aayog has recently announced the 5th Edition of the Women Transforming India Awards (WTI).
- The Women Transforming India Awards is NITI Aayog's annual initiative to highlight the commendable and ground-breaking endeavours of India's women leaders and change-makers.

Categories of Awards

- The Applications for the WTI Awards '21 is done for following seven categories:
 - Public and Community Service**
 - Manufacturing Sector**
 - Non-manufacturing Sector**
 - Financial Products enabling Economic Growth**
 - Climate Action**
 - Promote Art, Culture and Handicrafts**
 - Digital Innovation**

About Women Entrepreneurship Platform

- Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is an aggregator portal that aims to catalyse the entrepreneurial ecosystem for women and address information asymmetry.
- To build a vibrant ecosystem for women-led enterprises, the platform works to strengthen industry linkages and increase awareness of existing programmes and services.



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GENERAL STUDIES - II

5th BIMSTEC Summit

Context

- The Prime Minister of India has recently participated in the 5th BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Summit hosted in virtual mode by Sri Lanka which is the current chair of BIMSTEC.

More about the summit

- The Summit's theme "Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy People" captures the main current priorities of member states.
- The BIMSTEC efforts to develop cooperation activities that support member state's programmes to deal with the economic and development consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- India called upon fellow members to strive to transform the Bay of Bengal into a Bridge of Connectivity, Prosperity, and Security among the BIMSTEC-member countries.

Signing of the BIMSTEC Charter

- The main outcome of the Summit was the adoption and signing of the BIMSTEC Charter, which formalises the grouping into an organisation made up of member states and dependent upon the Bay of Bengal.

Master Plan for Transport Connectivity

- The summit participants adopted the Master Plan for Transport Connectivity applicable for 2018-2028.
- It was devised and backed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- It lists 264 projects entailing a total investment of \$126 billion.
- Projects worth \$55 billion are under implementation.

Sectors of cooperation

- The Summit decided to re-constitute and reduce the number of sectors of cooperation from the unwieldy 14 to a more manageable seven.
- Each member-state will serve as a lead for a sector:
 1. **Trade, investment and development (Bangladesh)**
 2. **Environment and climate change (Bhutan)**
 3. **Security, including energy (India)**
 4. **Agriculture and food security (Myanmar)**
 5. **People-to-people contacts (Nepal)**
 6. **Science, technology and innovation (Sri Lanka)**
 7. **Connectivity (Thailand)**

Three new agreements

- Finally, the package also includes three new agreements signed by member states, relating to:
 1. **Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters**
 2. **Cooperation between diplomatic academies**
 3. **Establishment of a technology transfer facility in Colombo**

WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India

Context

- The centre has recently approved the establishment of the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (WHO GCTM) in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

Traditional Medicine

- Traditional medicine is a key pillar of health care delivery systems and plays a crucial role in maintaining good health and well-being.

- Safe and effective traditional medicine will play a significant role in ensuring all people have access to quality essential health care services and safe, effective and affordable essential medicines as the world approaches the ten-year milestone for Sustainable Development Goals in 2030.

About WHO-GCTM

- The WHO-GCTM will identify various challenges faced by the countries in regulating, integrating and further positioning Traditional Medicine in respective countries.
- This would be the first and only global outpost Centre (office) for traditional medicine across the globe.
- The WHO GCTM would provide leadership on all global health matters related to traditional medicine as well as extend support to member countries in shaping various policies related to traditional medicine research, practices and public health.

Benefits

- To develop specific capacity building and training programmes in the areas of relevance
- To conduct training programmes in campus, residential, or web-based, and through partnerships with the WHO Academy and other strategic partners.
- To provide leadership on global health matters pertaining to traditional medicine.
- To ensure quality, safety and efficacy, accessibility and rational use of traditional medicine.
- To position AYUSH systems across the globe
- To develop norms, standards, and guidelines in relevant technical areas, tools and methodologies, for collecting data undertaking analytics, and assess impact.

Joint Task Force

- A Joint Task Force (JTF) was constituted for coordination, execution and monitoring of activities for the establishment of this Centre.
- JTF comprises representatives from the Government of India, Permanent Mission of India, Geneva and the World Health Organisation.
- Under the ambit of this, an interim office is being established at the ITRA, Jamnagar, Gujarat to execute the identified technical activities and planning of fully functional WHO GCTM.

New India Literacy Programme (NILP)

Context

- The Union of India has approved a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, namely, "New India Literacy Programme (NILP)".

Aim of the program

- The NILP aims to support the States and Union Territories in promoting literacy among non-literates in the age group of 15 and above, across the country covering 5 crore non-literates during the implementation period from 2022-23 to 2026-27.
- The scheme has been approved with a financial outlay of Rs.1037.90 crore.
- The scheme has five components namely:
 1. **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**
 2. **Critical Life Skills**
 3. **Vocational Skills Development**
 4. **Basic Education**
 5. **Continuing Education**

Key features

- The salient features of the NILP are:
 1. Involvement of school students, pre-service students of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), school teachers, Anganwadi and ASHA workers, NYKS, NSS, NCC volunteers.
 2. School to be unit for implementation of the scheme
 3. Use of ICT and online implementation of the scheme through 'Online Teaching Learning and Assessment System' (OTLAS)

4. Material and resources through digital modes, viz, TV, radio, cell phone-based free/open-source Apps/portals, etc
5. Assessment tests to be conducted in schools by State/UTs and evaluation of learners by NIOS/SIOS.
6. Sample achievement survey

MoD Nod for defence acquisition procedure

Context

- Recently, the Ministry of Defence has offered four projects related to the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force to the private sector for design and development.
- The four projects to the Indian Industry for design & development under Make-I category of Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020.
- The industry will be provided financial support for prototype development of these projects.

List of Projects

- The list of projects which were accorded 'Approval In-Principle (AIP)' by Committee of MoD is as follow:
 1. Indian Air Force: Communication Equipment with Indian Security Protocols (Routers, Switches, Encryptors, VoIP Phones and their software)
 2. Indian Air Force: Airborne Electro Optical pod with Ground Based System
 3. Indian Air Force: Airborne Stand-off Jammer
 4. Indian Army: Indian Light Tank

This is for the first time since the launch of Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020 that the Indian industry has been involved in development of big-ticket platforms such as light tanks and communication equipment with Indian security protocols.

Industry-funded Make-II procedure

- In addition, 'Approval In-Principle (AIP)' has also been accorded to following five projects under industry-funded Make-II procedure:
 1. Indian Air Force: Full Motion Simulator for Apache Helicopter
 2. Indian Air Force: Full Motion Simulator for Chinook Helicopter
 3. Indian Air Force: Wearable Robotic Equipment for Aircraft Maintenance
 4. Indian Army: Integrated Surveillance and Targeting System for Mechanised Forces
 5. Indian Army: Autonomous Combat Vehicle

India - Bangladesh Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

Context

- Recently the Inaugural session of India-Bangladesh Stakeholder was held to boost trade relationship between India-Bangladesh bilateral.

Agenda of meeting

- The government of India wanted to move forward with a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Bangladesh and called for greater cooperation between the countries in areas such as defence and pharmaceuticals production.
- In FY21, trade with Bangladesh accounted for about 3.3 per cent of exports at \$9.7 billion and 0.3 per cent of imports at \$1.3 billion.
- India said that it needs to give more impetus to joint production of defence equipment.
- The defence cooperation has not progressed though India offered a \$500 million dollars line of credit.
- Explore potential areas of investments, like Textiles, Jute products, Leather & Footwear

Boosting pharmacy capabilities

- India and Bangladesh look forward to a joint development program for vaccines and other medicines and become the "pharmacy of the world."
- There is also a need to build uninterrupted resilient supply chains and explore potential areas of investments like textile, jute products, leather and footwear as two other focus areas.

Draft National Medical Devices Policy 2022

Context

- Recently, the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has released an Approach Paper for the Draft National Policy for the Medical Devices, 2022.

Objectives of the Draft Policy

- The Draft policy aims at addressing the core objectives of accessibility, affordability, safety and quality, focus on self-sustainability, innovation and growth in the Medical devices sector.
 - Quality Standards and Safety of the Devices in order to provide safe devices to the consumers.
 - Regulatory streamlining to optimise regulatory processes and to promote ease of doing business.
 - Infrastructure Development to provide the best physical foundation, including medical devices parks with common facilities such as testing centres, to improve cost competitiveness and enhance attraction of domestic manufacturers.
 - Promoting Research and Development and Innovation.
 - Human Resource Development to create manpower with required skills.
 - Awareness Creation and Brand Positioning in creating awareness and positioning India as a hub for manufacturing of medical devices as part of the "Make in India, Make for the World" initiative.
- This Policy target that by 2047, our Country:
 - Will be home and originator to 25 high-end futuristic technologies in MedTech.
 - Will have a MedTech Industry of \$100-300 Bn size with 10-12% of Global Market Share.

Medical devices sector

- The medical devices sector in India is an essential and integral constituent of the Indian healthcare sector, particularly for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of all medical conditions, diseases, illnesses, and disabilities.
- The Medical Device Sector has remained largely unregulated till 2017 when Medical Device Rules, 2017 were framed by CDSCO for comprehensive regulation of Medivak devices in a phased manner, especially on the quality, safety, and efficacy aspects, under the Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940
- The Indian medical device market has a significant presence of multinational companies with about 80% of the sales by value generated from imported medical devices.

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GENERAL STUDIES - III

India Cooling Action Plan

Context

- Recently, the Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change has launched the India Cooling Action Plan.
- The plan calls for sustainable cooling as well as the need to protect the ozone layer.

About India Cooling Action Plan

The India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) provides an integrated vision towards cooling across sectors encompassing:

- Reduction of cooling demand
- Refrigerant transition
- Enhancing energy efficiency
- Better technology options by 2037-38 through forging synergies with on-going programmes/ schemes of the Government.

Recommendation under India Cooling Action Plan

- With regard to reduction of cooling and energy demand in Space Cooling in the building sector, a list of action points have been finalised after mapping the recommendations of the India Cooling Action Plan with the ongoing government programmes/ schemes of the various Ministries.
- Towards promoting passive cooling in buildings, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) has brought out the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) for all large commercial (non-residential) buildings and Eco-Niwas Samhita (ECBC-R) for the residential buildings.
- Studies on promoting non-Ozone Depleting Substances (ODSs) and low Global Warming Potential based technologies in Cold Chain
- Promoting indigenous development of low global warming potential refrigerants.
- Up-skilling and certification of 43,450 Refrigeration and Air-conditioning (RAC) service under the national skill qualification framework (NSQF) of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
- Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) phase out Management Plans under the Montreal Protocol.

India's global commitments

India is a signatory to major global environmental conventions and treaties including:

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- Paris Agreement
- Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
- Minamata Convention on Mercury
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

India's Target

- India has taken ambitious targets in support of global environmental goals as evidenced in its Nationally Determined Contributions for combating Climate Change under the Paris Agreement, ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol for phase down of Hydrofluorocarbons, restoration of 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and conserving 30% of land and oceans by 2030.
- India engaged constructively with all member states in the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) in 2022 to develop consensus on the resolution for driving global action on plastic pollution.

National Rail Plan Vision 2030

Context

- The ministry of Railways has recently unveiled the National Rail Plan (NRP) for India – 2030.

Aim of National Rail Plan

- The National Rail Plan (NRP) is aimed to formulate strategies based on both operational capacities and commercial policy initiatives to increase modal share of the Railways in freight to 45%.
- The plan also aims to create capacity ahead of demand, which in turn would also cater to future growth in demand right up to 2050.
- This will also increase the modal share of Railways to 45% in freight traffic and to continue to sustain it.
- The Plan is to create a ‘future ready’ Railway system by 2030.

Objectives of NRP

- Formulate strategies based on both operational capacities and commercial policy initiatives to increase modal share of the Railways in freight to 45%.
- Reduce transit time of freight substantially by increasing average speed of freight trains to 50Kmph.
- As part of the National Rail Plan, Vision 2024 has been launched for accelerated implementation of certain critical projects by 2024 such as:
 1. Multi-tracking of congested routes
 2. Upgradation of speed to 160 kmph on Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai routes
 3. Upgradation of speed to 130kmph on all other Golden Quadrilateral-Golden Diagonal (GQ/GD) routes and elimination of all Level Crossings on all GQ/GD routes.
 4. Identify new Dedicated Freight Corridors.
 5. Identify new High Speed Rail Corridors.

Assess Locomotive requirement

- Assess Locomotive requirement to meet twin objectives of 100% electrification (Green Energy) and increasing freight modal share.
- Sustained involvement of the Private Sector in areas like operations and ownership of rolling stock, development of freight and passenger terminals, development/operations of track infrastructure etc.

National Innovation Conclave on Low Carbon Technologies

Context

- Recently, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency commemorated its 20th Foundation Day by organising the National Innovation Conclave on Low Carbon Technologies.

Aim of the conclave

- National Innovation Conclave on Low Carbon Technologies provided a platform to present the innovations showing benefits of energy savings and greenhouse gas emission reduction potential when deployed at a large scale in industrial and commercial sectors.
- The conclave endeavours to establish a robust ecosystem for innovation.
- It is a step in the direction of Energy conservation and making India heading towards cleaner and greener.
- The conclave focussed on the challenges in low-carbon innovation including the need for financing towards commercialization and scale up.

Global cooperation

- The Facility for Low Carbon Technology Deployment (FLCTD) is a project financed by the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, implemented by the **United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)** in collaboration with the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**.

About Facility for Low Carbon Technology Deployment

- The Facility for Low Carbon Technology Deployment (FLCTD) Project was launched in 2016.
- The core objective of FLCTD was to identify;

1. Innovative energy efficiency
2. Low carbon technology solutions that address the existing technology gaps in Indian industrial and commercial sectors.
3. FLCTD has identified six priority technology verticals for 'Innovation Challenge'.
4. Waste Heat Recovery
5. Space Conditioning
6. Pumps and Pumping Systems and Motors
7. Industrial IoT
8. Industrial Resource Efficiency
9. Electrical Energy Storage

7th National Conference on Economics of Competition Law

Context

- The Competition Commission of India has recently organised the 7th National Conference on Economics of Competition Law via Virtual Mode.
- CCI has been organising the Conference every year since 2016.

About the conference

- The Conference is an endeavour to develop and sustain interest in the Economics of Competition Law and create a critical mass of antitrust economists.
- It brings together scholars, practitioners, academicians and experts working in the area of economics of competition law.
- Knowledge sharing and discussions at the conference go beyond case specific sessions and provide the economic milieu for the enforcement of the Act.

Objective of conference

The objectives of the conference are:

- To stimulate research and debate on contemporary issues in the field of economics of competition law
- To develop a better understanding of competition issues relevant to the Indian context and
- To draw inferences for enforcement of competition law in India.

PLI Scheme for White Goods

Context

- The Union Cabinet had given approval for the PLI Scheme for White Goods for manufacture of components and sub-assemblies of Air Conditioners (ACs) and LED Lights.

Roadmap for the scheme

- In pursuance of Prime Minister's clarion call for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' to bring manufacturing at the centre stage and emphasise its significance in driving India's growth and creating jobs.
- The Scheme will be implemented over a seven-year period, from FY 2021-22 to FY 2028-29 and has an outlay of Rs. 6,238 crore.

#PLIforAatmanirbharBharat
Government approves
PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR AIR CONDITIONERS AND LED LIGHTS

- Incentive of ₹6,238 crore over 5 years for manufacturing in India
- Production worth ₹1.68 lakh crore & Exports worth ₹64,400 crore estimated
- Creation of 4 lakh direct & indirect jobs in 5 years

Tenure	Incentives	Target Segments	Eligibility
5 years from FY 2021-22 to FY 2028-29. An applicant may opt for any one of the following initial investment (gestation) periods: i. 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 ii. 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2023	The scheme will extend an incentive of 4-6% on incremental turnover over base year (2019-20) of goods sold in India and exported to global markets, to eligible companies for a period of 5 years.	a. High value and/ or Low value intermediaries for production of AC & LED Lights b. Each target segment will have two categories of investments: Large and Normal	1. Indian / Foreign / JV company 2. Threshold of cumulative investment 3. Threshold of incremental sales

About PLI Scheme

- The centre has launched the Production-Linked Incentive(PLI) in March 2020.
- Under the scheme, incentives are offered to companies on incremental sales from products manufactured in India over the base year.
- The PLI scheme aims to make manufacturing globally competitive in India by removing sectoral disabilities, ensuring efficiencies and creating economies of scale.

Supercomputer PARAM

Context

- A new supercomputer "PARAM Ganga" with a supercomputing capacity of 1.66 petaflops has been recently deployed at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

National Supercomputing Mission

- In 2015, the National Supercomputing Mission was launched to enhance the research capacities and capabilities in the country.
- The National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) is joint initiative by Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeiTY) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and implemented by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, has progressed significantly.
- The four major pillars of the NSM, namely, Infrastructure, Applications, R&D, HRD, have been functioning efficiently to realise the goal of developing indigenous supercomputing eco system of the nation.

About Supercomputer PARAM Ganga

- The Supercomputer PARAM Ganga has been established by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).
- The rationale behind building a Petascale Supercomputer with manufactured in India components has led the path towards Atma Nirbhar Bharat.
- It aims to accelerate the problem-solving capacity in multidisciplinary domains.

About Supercomputer

- A supercomputer is a computer that performs the currently highest operational rate for computers.
- The PETAFLUP is a measure of a Supercomputer's processing speed and can be expressed as a thousand trillion floating-point operations per second.
- Supercomputers are primarily designed to be used in enterprises and organisations that require massive computing power such as weather forecasting, scientific research, intelligence gathering and analysis, data mining etc.

Supercomputer in India

- PARAM Shivay, the first supercomputer assembled indigenously, was installed in IIT (BHU), followed by PARAM Shakti, PARAM Brahma, PARAM Yukti, PARAM Sanganak at IIT-Kharagpur, IISER, Pune, JNCASR, Bengaluru and IIT Kanpur respectively.
- In 2020, PARAM Siddhi, the High-Performance Computing-Artificial Intelligence (HPC-AI) supercomputer, achieved global ranking of 62nd in Top 500 most powerful supercomputer systems in the world.

Hansa-NG

Context

- India's first indigenously developed monoplane Hansa-NG clears a milestone by successfully completing sea level trials.

About Hansa-NG

- Hansa-New Generation (Hansa-NG) trainer, India's first indigenously designed and developed two-seater monoplane.
- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL) designed trainer has just successfully completed its sea level trials at Puducherry.
- The manufacture of the Hansa-NG will enhance the Indian aerospace ecosystem under Atma Nirbhar Bharat

Sea trials

- The objective of these trials was to evaluate handling qualities, climb and cruise performance, balked landing, structural performance, including positive and negative G force, power plant and other systems performance at sea level.
- The performance of the Hansa NG's digitally controlled Rotax 912 ISC



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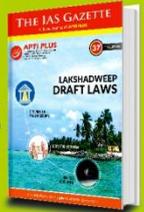


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SHORT NEWS

- Arogya Vanam:** Recently the President of India inaugurated a newly developed Arogya Vanam at the President's Estate.
 - It has been developed in the shape of a human sitting in the Yoga Mudra.
 - It consists of around 215 herbs and plants used for therapeutic purposes in Ayurveda.
 - The concept of Arogya Vanam has been conceived with the aim of publicising the importance of Ayurvedic plants and their effects on the human body.
- Sagar Parikrama:** It was recently launched by the ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
 - The journey of 'Sagar Parikrama' shall focus on sustainable balance between the utilisation of marine fisheries resources for food security of the nation and livelihoods of coastal fisher communities and protection of marine ecosystems.
- Roorkee Water Conclave 2022:** The Minister for Jal Shakti inaugurated the 2nd edition of the 'Roorkee Water Conclave' today at IIT, Roorkee.
 - The Conclave was jointly organised by Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee and National Institute of Hydrology.
 - The conclave focuses on the theme, 'Water Security for Sustainable Development'.
- Jan Aushadhi Bal Mitra programme:** On the eve of Jan Aushadhi Diwas celebrations, Jan Aushadhi Bal Mitra programme has been conducted across the country.
 - It aims to engage children as Bal Mitras with Jan Aushadhi scheme to educate them about the benefits of the Pariyojana, price difference between Jan Aushadhi medicines and branded medicines, savings, Jan Aushadhi Seva Bhi Rozgar Bhi.
- BIS certification for Soy product:** Recently the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) organised an awareness and implementation webinar on 'Indian Standards on Soy Products'.
 - The motto of certification is to increase health consciousness among the general people.
 - The manufacturers were encouraged to take BIS certification for use of Standards Mark (ISI mark) on their products.
- PM-DevINE for North East:** The Union budget 2022-23 has announced a new scheme, Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East (or PM-DevINE).
 - PM-DevINE will enable livelihood activities for youth and women by filling the gaps in various sectors, but it will not be a substitute for existing Central or State schemes.
 - The scheme which will fund infrastructure in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti, and social development projects based on felt needs of the North-East.
- Smile Scheme:** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched an umbrella scheme "SMILE - Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise".
 - The scheme includes two sub-schemes - 'Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons' and 'Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging'.
 - This umbrella scheme covers several comprehensive measures including:
 - Welfare measures for both transgender persons and persons who are engaged in the act of begging with focus extensively on rehabilitation
 - Provision of medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development, economic linkages etc with the support of State Governments/UTs/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organisations, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and institutions and others.
- Best Tableaux Trophy for Republic Day 2022:** Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) was conferred with "Best Tableaux" Trophy for 2022.

9. **Operation Ganga:** 'Operation Ganga' is the initiative launched by the government of India to bring back Indians stranded in Ukraine.
- Russia has recently invaded Ukraine which it calls Russia's "special military operation".
10. **"Go Electric" Campaign:** The Ministry of Power launched the "Go Electric" Campaign recently.
- The objective of this campaign is to create awareness among masses about benefits of switching over to Electric Vehicles (EVs), including various initiatives taken by Centre & State Governments to enhance acceptability of Electric Vehicles, and Electrical Cooking.
11. **Second Edition of Export Preparedness Index:** NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the Institute of Competitiveness released the second edition of the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2021.
- The Export Preparedness Index ranks all States and Union Territories (UTs) on the basis of their export readiness and performance.
 - EPI 2021 is based on four main pillars: **policy; business ecosystem; export ecosystem; and export performance.**
 - Recently NITI Aayog and FAO has launch Book Titled **"Indian Agriculture towards 2030"**
 - The book discusses Pathways for Enhancing Farmers' Income, Nutritional Security and Sustainable Food and Farm Systems.

Bilateral Agreements and Summits

India - Canada to re-launch CEPA

- India and Canada recently held the fifth Ministerial Dialogue on Trade & Investment (MDTI).
- Both countries agreed to formally re-launch the negotiations for India-Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and also consider an Interim Agreement or Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA) that could bring early commercial gains to both the countries.
- The Interim Agreement would include high level commitments in:
 1. Goods, services
 2. Rules of origin
 3. Sanitary and phytosanitary measures
 4. Technical barriers to trade, and dispute settlement

Other area of interest

- India and Canada have also acknowledged the significance of establishing resilient supply chains in critical sectors and exchanged views on collaboration in this area.
- They emphasised enhancing cooperation in sectors such as pharmaceuticals and critical and rare earth minerals as well as in areas like tourism, urban infrastructure, renewable energy and mining.
- They also noted the role of strong people-to-people ties between the two countries, including movement of professionals and skilled workers, students, and business travellers, in strengthening the bilateral economic partnership.

India-Australia Virtual Summit

- Recently, India and Australia held the second India-Australia Virtual Summit.
- The Summit follows the historic first Virtual Summit to be elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- The virtual summit laid the way forward on new initiatives and enhanced cooperation in a diverse range of sectors between India and Australia.
- Both countries commit to closer cooperation in trade, critical minerals, migration and mobility, and education, among others.
- Other wide-ranging areas of co-operation include:
 1. Science and technology
 2. Defence, cyber, critical and strategic materials
 3. Water resource management
 4. Public administration and governance

14th India Japan Annual Summit

- The 14th India-Japan Annual Summit was recently held in New Delhi,
- The previous India-Japan Annual Summit took place in Tokyo in October 2018.
- The Summit provides an opportunity for both sides to review and strengthen the bilateral cooperation in diverse areas as well as exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest so as to advance their Partnership for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.
- India and Japan have multifaceted cooperation within the ambit of their 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'.

CEPA between India and the United Arab Emirates

- In a major boost to bilateral ties between India and the United Arab Emirates, India has recently announced the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- India-UAE CEPA was signed on 18 February 2022.

Salient features of India-UAE CEPA

- The India-UAE CEPA is the first deep and full free trade Agreement to be signed by India with any country in the past decade.
- The Agreement is a comprehensive agreement, which will cover:
 1. Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin
 2. Trade in Services
 3. Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
 4. Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures
 5. Dispute Settlement
 6. Movement of Natural Persons
 7. Telecom, Customs Procedures
 8. Pharmaceutical products
 9. Government Procurement
 10. IPR, Investment, Digital Trade and Cooperation

Military Exercises in News

EX DUSTLIK Exercise

- The 3rd edition of Indo-Uzbekistan Joint Field Training Exercise " EX DUSTLIK" concluded in Uzbekistan.
- The joint exercise provided an opportunity for both the contingents to train in Counter Terrorism operations in an semi-urban environment.
- The Exercise will enhance the level of defence cooperation between both the Armies and will act as a catalyst for many such joint programs in future to further consolidate the traditional bond of friendship between India and Uzbekistan.

IONS Maritime Exercise 2022 (IMEX 22)

- The maiden edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Maritime Exercise 2022 (IMEX-22) was conducted at Goa and in the Arabian.
- The aim of the exercise was to enhance interoperability in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations among member navies.
- The exercise witnessed participation of 15 out of the 25 member nations of IONS.
- The forum has enabled discussions on regional maritime issues, promoted friendly relationships, and significantly improved maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region.

Exercise Lamitiye

- The 9th edition of India - Seychelles Joint Training Exercise Exercise Lamitiye-2022 took place recently.
- The exercise focused on enhancing interoperability for developing the capability to undertake joint operations in a semi urban environment.
- Both countries have broadened their cooperation aiming towards co-existence in the Indo-Pacific Region.

- The exercise strengthened mutual confidence, interoperability and enabled sharing of best practices between the Armed Forces.

Exercise Varuna - 2022

- The 20th edition of the **Bilateral Naval Exercise** between **Indian and French Navies** - 'VARUNA' was conducted recently in the Arabian Sea
- The Bilateral Naval Exercises between the two Navies were initiated in 1993.
- The exercise has been a principal driver for operational level interactions between the two navies and has underscored the shared commitment of both nations to security, safety and freedom of the global maritime commons.

China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting

- The 15th round China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting was held at Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side.
- The two sides carried forward their discussions from the previous round held in January 2022 for the resolution of the relevant issues along the LAC in the Western Sector.
- The two sides also agreed to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector in the interim.
- Both countries agreed to maintain dialogue via military and diplomatic channels to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest.

Military Exercise SLINEX

- The Ninth Edition of India - Sri Lanka Bilateral Maritime Exercise SLINEX (Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise) was held at Visakhapatnam recently.
- SLINEX aims to enhance interoperability, improve mutual understanding and exchange best practices and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations between both navies.
- These will further enhance the high degree of interoperability already existing between the two navies.

Sea Phase of MILAN 2022

- The Sea Phase of MILAN 2022 commenced on 01 Mar 2022.
- The Sea Phase of MILAN aims to enhance interoperability and maritime cooperation and share best practices amongst the participating navies.
- The schedule includes Weapon firings, Seamanship evolutions, advanced anti-submarine warfare exercises, cross deck helicopter landings, simulation of complex operational scenarios and tactical manoeuvres.

19th India & US Military Cooperation

- The 19th edition of India-US Military Cooperation Group (MCG) meeting was held in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
- The discussions focussed on strengthening the ongoing defence engagements between the two sides and mulled on new initiatives under the ambit of existing cooperation mechanism.

YOJANA

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- The table of content is segregated as per its relevance with Mains Syllabus of CSE Examination.
- The article mention under GS paper in table of content might be important for many other topics in GS Papers as well.
- The details relevance of each article/Topics with respect to GS syllabus has been mention at the starting of each article.

GENERAL STUDIES - I

Initiatives for Rural Women

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - I: Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

GS - II: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Introduction

- The Women that are linked with Self-Help Groups are considered to be the champions of the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign.
- These Self-Help Groups are actually national help groups.
- Therefore, the assistance given under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission has increased by almost 13 times in the last seven years in contrast to five years before 2014.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana

- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), a centrally sponsored programme that aims at eliminating rural poverty through promotion of multiple livelihoods for each rural poor household, is proving to be the game-changer.
- Launched in 2011, DAY-NRLM aims to reach out to 9-10 crore rural poor households by 2023-24.
- The Mission provides long-term support to the community institutions and its members in such a way that they diversify their livelihoods improving their incomes and quality of life.

Key Principles

- The Mission believes that organising poor rural women into their institutions, supporting a basket of livelihood activities and facilitating access to credit can bring remarkable transformation in their lives.
- The design of DAY-NRLM is based on the following key principles:
 1. Poor have a strong desire to come out of poverty, and they have innate capabilities to do so. Social mobilisation and building strong institutions of the poor is critical for giving voice to the voiceless
 2. Long-term and continuous financial and livelihood support is required for the rural poor households to come out of poverty
 3. Capacity building and nurturing of the poor is most effective and sustainable when it is done by the poor themselves
 4. Sustainable development of the poor requires promotion of multiple livelihoods – asset as well as skill-based livelihoods in farm as well as non-farm sectors.

Components DAY-NRLM

- **Institution Building and Capacity Building:** Promotion of community institutions and their capacity building is one of the core components of DAY-NRLM.
 1. The Mission aims to mobilise one woman member from each rural poor household into Self-Help Group (SHG).
 2. The community institutions provide a collective platform for the rural poor to overcome poverty through access to financial, technical and marketing resources.
 3. These institutions require continuous and intensive capacity building and training.
 4. The Mission provides funds to these community institutions in the form of Revolving Fund (RF) and Community Investment Fund (CIF) etc., to strengthen their financial base and help them leverage additional funds.

5. As an integral approach to capacity building, the Mission is ensuring training of the persons from the community itself, so that they provide 24x7 hand holding support to the SHG members.
- **Financial Inclusion:** DAY-NRLM facilitates universal access to the affordable, cost-effective, reliable financial services to the poor.
 1. It works on both demand and supply sides of financial inclusion by promoting financial literacy among the poor and providing catalytic capital to the SHGs.
 2. Financial inclusion is primarily being facilitated by enabling SHGs to be linked to Banks and to access all financial services including loans.
 3. DAY-NRLM has also been instrumental in providing last mile delivery of financial services in remote rural areas where people do not have much access to Banking services.
 - **Interest Subvention:** In order to reduce the effective cost of Bank credit to women SHGs, DAY-NRLM provides interest subvention and additional interest subvention to SHGs.
 1. All women SHGs whose members are from the DAY-NRLM target group are eligible for receiving interest subvention equal to the difference between the borrowing rate of interest and 7%.



Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)

- As part of the livelihood intervention, MKSP was initiated as a sub-component of DAY-NRLM in 2011.
- The primary objective of the MKSP is to empower women by making systematic investments to enhance their participation and productivity and also to create sustainable livelihoods for rural women.

Objective of scheme

- The key objectives of the sub-scheme include:
 - To enhance the productive participation of women in agriculture
 - To create sustainable agricultural livelihood opportunities for women in agriculture
 - To improve the skills and capabilities of women in agriculture to support farm and non-farm-based activities
 - To ensure food and nutrition security at the household and the community level
 - To enable women to have better access to inputs and services of the government and other agencies
 - To enhance the managerial capacities of women in agriculture for better management of biodiversity.

Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)

- The SVEP is the sub-scheme under DAY-NRLM that develops an ecosystem for supporting small businesses in rural areas.
- The eco-system has components for providing business support services, mentorship, seed capital, training & capacity building on business and technical aspects and marketing support.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

Strengthening Federalism

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Introduction

- India is a country with continental proportions and draws upon her diversity as a strength. Federalism was the model adopted that would best suit an Independent India.
- The dynamics of Federalism in the country appear to be coming into attention more than ever before.

Formation of NITI Aayog

- To better serve the needs and aspirations of the people in the federal polity, in a major step moving away from centralised planning to a more decentralised and participative setup, the Planning Commission was replaced by the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) on 1 January 2015.
- From a body like the Planning Commission which imposed policies on States and tied allocation of funds with projects it approved, the nation moved to a think tank which enables greater role for involvement of the States in policy making and offers expert guidance and policy advice through its state-of-the-art Resource Centre.
- Cooperation and competition are the two sides of the same coin— 'Federalism'.
- NITI Aayog since its inception has been able to balance the two and provide necessary support to the States.

Cooperative Federalism

- NITI Aayog works towards a shared vision of national development priorities with the active involvement of States to foster cooperative federalism.
- **Governing Council:** NITI's Governing Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, comprises all the Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors of UTs as equal members and a selected Government of India ministers.
- The Governing Council meets annually to evolve a shared vision of the country's economic development.
- The 6th Governing Council Meeting held on 20 February 2021, a unique exercise took place where extensive workshops were held between NITI Aayog, Ministries and State Governments to finalize the agenda for the Governing Council's deliberations.

Strategy document in 2017

- One of NITI Aayog's major initiatives since its inception has been formulating the Strategy document in 2017 (India@75).
- Its preparation followed an extremely participative approach.
- Over 800 stakeholders from within the government— Central, State and District levels— and about 550 external experts were consulted during the preparation of the document.

Focus of Strategy document

- The overarching focus of the Strategy document was to further improve the policy environment in which private investors and other stakeholders can contribute their fullest towards achieving the goals set out for New India 2022 and propel India towards a USD 5 trillion economy.
- These steps are showcased in the development blueprints prepared jointly with Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, and Madhya Pradesh.
- States and UTs have explored and innovated different ways for such institutional development.

Competitive Federalism

- NITI Aayog attempts to promote competitive federalism by means of facilitating improved performance of States/UTs.
- It stimulates healthy competition among States through:
 1. **Developing indicator frameworks and transparent rankings in various sectors**
 2. **Review mechanisms**
 3. **Capacity-building with a hand-holding approach**

A. States Ranked

- States are ranked through various indices measuring ease of doing business to Sustainable Development Goals.
- The ranking on social indicators based on quantitative objective criteria encourages States (and districts) to improve their performance.

B. Performance of Aspirational Districts

- As one of its major transformative initiatives, NITI Aayog also releases rankings in the monthly changes in the performance of Aspirational Districts.
- The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) of NITI Aayog launched in January 2018 focuses on 112 of India's most developmentally challenged districts across sectors such as health and nutrition; education; agriculture and water resources; basic infrastructure; and financial inclusion and skill development.

Aim of Ranking

- The aim of these rankings is to promote immediate improvement through greater efficiency and convergence in governance and measuring progress by ranking districts on a monthly basis.
- Promoting the spirit of competitive and cooperative federalism
- Districts are supplied supplementary funding from the Government of India to focus on key projects in their districts.
- Top ranked aspirational district gets Rs 10 crore, second best receives Rs 5 crore and sector wise best gets Rs 3 crore each.

Other major indices by NITI Aayog

- Some of the indices launched by NITI Aayog are:
 1. **Composite Water Management Index**
 2. **India Innovation Index**
 3. **Export Competitiveness Index**
 4. **School Education Quality Index**
 5. **State Health Index**
 6. **Sustainable Development Goals Index**

Fostering Localisation of SDGs

- Starting in 2018, NITI defined the contours of the national progress monitoring SDGs based on key national development priorities in its first ever framework for monitoring the country's progress on the SDGs – SDG India Index and Dashboard.
- The latest version of the SDG India Index contains 100+ indicators.
- Most recently, as a part of its localisation efforts, NITI published the first regional index – The North-Eastern Region District SDG Index.

Strengthening Fiscal Federalism

- Fiscal federalism has also seen substantial strengthening since 2014.
- The successive Finance Commissions have raised the share of States in tax revenues from 29.5% between 2000-05 to 42% currently.

Centre's Fiscal support measures

- Among the key fiscal support measures by the Centre to States to fight Covid-19 and support economic growth, the Centre increased the borrowing limits of States from 3.0% of GSDP to 5.0% for 2020-21, providing the States extra resources of Rs 4.3 lakh crore.
- As highlighted in Budget 2022-23, GST has been “a landmark reform of independent India showcasing the spirit of cooperative federalism”.
- Goods and Services Tax (GST) is governed by the GST Council.
- Total GST collections are estimated to grow 23% in 2021-22, as per revised estimates in the Budget.
- GST has played a major role in the formalisation of the Indian economy.

Way forward

- Reflecting the true spirit of federalism, the Central Government is committed to strengthening the hands of the States by enhancing their capital investment towards creating productive assets and generating remunerative employment.
- The Budget 2022-23 is a continuation of a series of reforms, policies and measures that have strengthened India's federal system.
- The increased capital expenditure on infrastructure will enhance economic activity across the nation.
- Fiscal federalism, combined with cooperative and competitive federalism will lead India into the post-pandemic era of rapid and equitable growth, improvement in the peoples' ease of living and environmental sustainability.

Demographics dividend

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS - III: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Introduction

- Youth has the potential and power to change the world for the better.
- Youth is often associated with innovative spirit, entrepreneurship, technological prowess, and sports that bring laurels to the nation.
- Harnessing the potential of youth for burgeoning economic opportunities is the role of key stakeholders.
- India has the largest youth population in the world; it becomes a dire need to focus on their development in this 75th year of India's independence.
- It is imperative to create an ecosystem to make them partners in the growth and development of a nation.

Background

- India's 1.38 billion people with a median age of 28 are one of the youngest populations in the world.
- China and the US that are much more developed and economically stable, are growing older faster than India.
- Currently, India is home to a fifth of the world's youth population advantage.
- India is in the midst of a demographic dividend.
- The young population is a valuable asset to economic growth; they will play a critical role in achieving the ambitious target to become a global powerhouse and achieve the target of a USD 5 trillion economy by 2024-25.

Enabling Entrepreneurial Potential

- The national income of any country increases if the workforce is educated and has employable skills.
- India has opportunities for job creation with a novel entrepreneurial culture.

- Disruptive technologies have developed a start-up ecosystem that is providing services in areas like healthcare, education, e-commerce, agribusiness and many more.
- India's young population is an attractive proposition for investments, locally as well as globally. India has become an investment hub for its entrepreneurial young population.
- Many private and public sector interventions are imparting skills to the country's youth.

Government interventions

- a) **National Skill Development Mission** is a game changer that is empowering youth with employable skill sets across multiple sectors and also improving productivity and efficiency.
- The Government of India initiatives such as **Start-up India, Digital India and Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)** have further enabled entrepreneurship and increased employment opportunities.
 - The Government's stress on the importance of Women Empowerment (**Nari Shakti**) is one of the key pillars of inclusive growth.

Budgetary Outlay

- The Budget 2022-23 provides impetus for growth as it lays a blueprint for the Amrit Kaal, which is futuristic and inclusive, and it holds a promising future ahead for education, up-skilling and employment.
 - The Budget has profoundly increased the outlay for the education sector by 11.86%.
- b) **GatiShakti**: The GatiShakti is a progressive model for economic growth and sustainable development; this will result in productivity enhancement and investments.
- This model is driven by seven engines, viz. roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways and logistics infrastructure.
 - This will spur economic growth by furthering the efforts of the public and private sector, leading to enormous job and entrepreneurial opportunities for the youth.

Courses on Fintech:

- Another significant highlight of the budget is permitting foreign universities and institutions under GIFT IFSC (International Financial Services Centre) to offer courses on Fintech and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).
- This move is projected to bring foreign institutions to India, who are exploring to have synergies with Indian Institutions, but were not able to do so in the past due to regulatory challenges.

- c) **PM-DevINE**: PM's Development Initiative for North East (PM-DevINE) with allocation of Rs 1,500 crore for development initiatives in the North Eastern Region (NER) will enable livelihood activities of youth in NER.

d) Start-ups

- The Budget 2022-23 has provided significant stimulus to the startup and digital ecosystem that is driving innovation.
- There is an increased thrust on artificial intelligence, geospatial systems, drones, semiconductor ecosystem, genomics, green energy, clean mobility systems and pharmaceuticals.
- This will be the engine of economic and social growth for the youth-led New India.
- Apart from creating employment opportunities for youth, this will also make industry efficient and competitive.
- Futuristic technology such as the introduction of digital currency, rollout of 5G, e-passports using embedded chips are steps to make our nation futuristic and modern.

- e) **DESHStack e-portal**: The launch of Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood – DESHStack e-portal will motivate young population to learn and sharpen their skill sets apart from creating entrepreneurial opportunities.
- This will enable them to skill, re-skill and up-skill through online training.

- f) **PM eVIDYA programme**: The extension of PM eVIDYA programme from 12 to 200 TV channels will improve learning outcomes of young students.
- The launch of digital universities will increase the reach of quality education even in remote areas with the public universities and institutions working in hub and spoke format.

- This will act as a stimulus to India's tech savvy young population for gaining skills in this field.

g) Youth Entrepreneurship

- India has a strong start-up ecosystem.
- Currently, there are 63,103 start-ups registered by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- More than 50 unicorns were formed during the pandemic.
- With proactive policies for start-ups as announced in the Budget, India has the potential to drive innovation and entrepreneurial temper to create numerous employment opportunities.

Way forward

- The Budget lays down decent initiatives on the tax front, with extension of tax benefits for one more year and promoting Ease of Doing Business.
- Ease of Doing Business 2.0 will boost entrepreneurs and foster entrepreneurship significantly. The productivity-linked incentive scheme in 14 sectors with the potential to create 60 lakh new jobs will be a fountainhead for Indian youth which is a much-needed requirement for the growth of these sectors.
- Innovative and radical systems need to be developed in the field of education and skill development so that the youth grow academically and cognitively to gain competency for running our nation as future leaders.



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 GIRDHARI MEENA RANK 387	 LIMESH KUMAR RANK 397	 AMIT K. MAHATO RANK 416	 S. A. YADAV RANK 488	 SUNNY RAJ RANK 500	

ADMISSIONS OPEN FOR

UPSC CSE 2022-23

GENERAL STUDIES – III

Boosting Infrastructure

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS - III: Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

GS - III: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

GS - III: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Introduction

- Infrastructure development has been at the core of the government's efforts since 2014 to fuel economic growth.
- Good quality infrastructure improves productivity and for economic growth to be sustained, the growth has to be based on improving productivity.
- The government is pushing for investment in infrastructure as lead to:
- Creates jobs
- Boosts private investment in core sectors, reduces logistic costs for the economy, improves the competitiveness of the manufacturing industry in domestic and global markets, enhances government tax revenues, and improves ease of living for citizens.

Digital infrastructure

- The government focus has not only been on physical infrastructure but also digital infrastructure.
- The digital infrastructure created through the UPI initiative has been a singular success.
- The robust digital infrastructure has led to accessible financial services to citizens without having to visit a bank.
- Digital initiatives like Bharat Net-providing broadband access to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats; Aadhaar; Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission, etc. has enabled financial and social inclusion, and people-centric governance.

Government Intervention

- a) **National Infrastructure Pipeline:** The National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) came into being, with projects requiring an investment of Rs 111 lakh crore.
- The NIP coupled with the recently launched GatiShakti programme will ensure a complete approach and timely delivery based on better coordination and planning.
- b) **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan:** It is launched by the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** as a programme that includes 16 Ministries (including Railways & Roadways) for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects.
- It leverages a dynamic Geographic Information System (GIS) based ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) platform planned in collaboration with Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N).



National Master Plan For World Class Modern Infrastructure



- Completing 25,000 Km National Highways in 2022-23
- Unified Logistics Interface Platform
- Open Source Mobility Stack



- Integration of Postal and Railways Network
- One Station One Product
- 400 New-generation Vande Bharat Trains



- Multimodal Connectivity Between Urban Transport & Railway Stations
- National Ropeways Development Plan
- Capacity Building for Infrastructure Projects

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c) Bharatmala Pariyojana

- The Bharatmala Pariyojana outlines the blueprint for highway development in an integrated manner.
- Bharatmala Pariyojana is an umbrella programme for highway development that was envisaged to bridge critical infrastructure gaps across the country.
- The programme visualised construction of 34,800 km of National Highways to be implemented by three different agencies of the Ministry, i.e., NHAI (90%), MoRTH PWD (6%), and NHIDCL (4%).
- The programme follows a corridor-based National Highway development, connecting 550+ districts of the country and catering to 70-80% of total freight on National Highways.
- The 5 expressway projects- namely Delhi-Mumbai, Ahmedabad-Dholera, Bengaluru-Chennai, Delhi-Amritsar-Katra, and Kanpur-Lucknow- account for 2.485 km and a total capital cost of Rs 1.63 lakh crore.

d) National Highways progress

- The pace of award of works for National Highways has almost doubled from an average of approx. 5,900 km per annum between FY 2009-10 till FY 2013-14 to 11,000 km per annum since FY 2014-15.
- Similarly, the pace of annual construction has increased by 1.8 times to 9,000 km per annum since FY 2014-15, as compared to 4,900 km constructed per annum between FY 2009-10 till FY 2013-14.

e) Multi-Modal Logistics Parks (MMLP)

- Multi-Modal Logistics Parks (MMLPs) are critical enablers for ensuring integrated and efficient transportation as per the vision laid out in the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan.
- MMLPs enable seamless transfer of goods across modes and facilitate a hub and spoke model of freight movement with hub-to-hub line haul on more efficient modes.
- MMLPs shall also provide key services such as advanced storage infrastructure, first and last-mile connectivity to key nodes in freight networks, and value-added services such as customs clearance and provisions for late-stage processing activities.
- MMLPs are being developed across the country in 35 strategic locations (such as Jogighopa, Nagpur, Chennai, Indore, Bengaluru, etc.) to address inefficiencies in the logistics sector. These 35 MMLPs will cater to over 50% of the nation's road freight movement.

f) Srinagar-Leh Road

- At 14.96 km, the Zojila tunnel on the Srinagar-Leh Road will be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel.
- The tunnel will shorten the distance between Baltal (Sonamarg) and Minamarg in Ladakh from 40 km to 13 km, slashing travel time from three hours to 15 minutes.



Conclusion

- The keystone of governance is to create economic growth and spread the benefits of growth to all.
- The creation of physical infrastructure is equally important with its multiplier effect on economic growth.
- Good quality infrastructure improves productivity and for economic growth to be sustained, the growth has to be based on improving productivity.
- A better quality of life and "ease of living" results from policies that aim to create the right conditions for new economic opportunities.

Tax Proposals

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

GS - III: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

GS - III: Government Budgeting.

Introduction

- The union budget set a broader vision for the tax proposals for this year.
- It aims to make the Indian Taxation System act as a facilitator and enabler in the country's march towards prosperity.
- The Covid pandemic is receding and India is back on the high-growth trajectory of estimated 9.2% growth in the current financial year, which is the highest among all the large economies. India will continue to be the fastest-growing economy amongst the world's major economies in the coming years.

Direct Taxes

Updated Return

- Revenue collection is a sovereign function of the state which casts a responsibility on the taxpayer to file a return of income up to the due date as per the Income-tax Act,1961.
- The Act further allows the taxpayers, who could not file their return within the due date, to file a belated return of income up to three months prior to the end of the relevant assessment year.
- It has been felt that the time available to a taxpayer to submit or further update his particulars of income in the form of a return for an assessment year was not adequate.
- This inadequacy of time for filing or correcting the return becomes a significant concern in the face of the robust data collection and data sharing mechanism of the department.

Tax administration

- The lesson learned is that big data analytics is the way forward to ensure an effective and non-intrusive tax administration, which has resulted in the proposal for an updated return over and above the existing return by a taxpayer.
- This will enable the department to 'nudge' the taxpayer to "voluntarily" comply with tax laws.
- The Finance Bill, 2022 has proposed that such taxpayers can file an updated return of income from the last date of filing a revised return up to two years from the end of the relevant assessment year.
- An updated return can be furnished only once for an assessment year and also provides immunity from prosecution under the Act on failure to file the return of income.
- It is expected that the proposal will advance the goal of voluntary tax compliance and create an atmosphere of transparency, trust, and understanding between the taxpayers and revenue.

Start-up and New Manufacturing Units

- In our quest towards Atmanirbhar by promoting the growth of startups and the establishment of new manufacturing industries, the Government has provided for certain income tax deductions and concessional tax rates to such entities.
- However, due to the pandemic, these entities could not start their operations in time to avail such benefits.
- The Government has extended the required time period for the establishment of their businesses to enable them to avail these benefits.
- The tax regime for such entities is extremely friendly and provides a rate of 15% corporate tax.

Concessions to IFSC

- The Government is committed to making the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in GIFT City a globally competitive financial hub by providing a multitude of incentives.
- The principal logic of incentivising the GIFT City is to provide a tax-neutral avenue for relocation of financial services from the other hubs across the globe.

Taxation of Virtual Digital Assets

- The digitisation of the economy all over the world has posed several new challenges before the governing authorities in terms of their monitoring, regulation and their taxation.
- Accordingly, for the taxation of virtual digital assets, it has been proposed that any income from the transfer of any virtual digital asset shall be taxed at the rate of 30%.
- A Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) at the rate of 1% on the payment made in relation to the sale of a virtual digital asset above a prescribed monetary threshold has also been provided.

Provisions to Avoid Litigation Repeated

- Excessive litigation is a barrier to economic development of a nation.
- Protracted tax litigation often creates an atmosphere of uncertainty in the tax administration regime and discourages creation of a favourable economic climate.
- The Creation of Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP) vide the Finance Act, 2016, resolution mechanisms provided through the Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs), Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAAS) and Safe Harbour Rules, etc.



Allowing Taxpayers to File Updated Return within 2 Years for Correcting Errors



Extending Period of Incorporation by one more year of Eligible Startups for Providing Tax Incentives



Increasing Tax Deduction Limit on Employer's Contribution to NPS Account of State Govt Employees



Better Litigation Management to Avoid Repetitive Appeals



Tax Relief to Persons with Disability



Income from Transfer of Virtual Assets to be Taxed at 30%



Reducing Alternate Minimum Tax Rate & Surcharge for Cooperatives



Surcharge/ Cess on Income & Profits Not Allowable as Business Expenditure

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Classification of Cess

- The ambiguity in the interpretation of inclusion of 'Health and Education cess' as part of the income for the purpose of taxation has been a cause of a few litigations.
- A few courts have allowed 'Health and Education cess' as business expenditure, which is against the legislative intent.
- Therefore, in order to reiterate the legislative intent, it has been clarified that any surcharge or cess on income and profits is not allowable as business expenditure and should be included in the income to be taxed.

Expansion of Bonus & Dividend Stripping Provisions

- The Budget proposes to make the provisions of bonus stripping applicable to securities (including stocks and shares). Bonus stripping refers to a scenario where a taxpayer purchases securities prior to the record date, i.e., the date on which the company has announced to allot bonus securities.
- The Budget 2022 to include a broader variety of units namely, units of Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) or Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) or Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) apart from securities, i.e., debt and equity.

Provisions Relating to Charitable Trusts

- Charitable trusts contribution is acknowledged in the form of tax exemptions granted to them for their meaningful activities.
- Amendments have been proposed in the Budget to bring certainty and clarity to the relevant provisions.
- Basically, the two sets of provisions in Section 10(23C) and Section 11 and 12 which govern the regimes related to trusts and charitable institutions have been broadly aligned.

Indirect Taxes

Review of Customs Duty Exemptions

- A comprehensive review of more than 400 existing customs duty exemptions was undertaken by the government.

Simpler Customs Tariff Regime

- Customs duty structure is prescribed through Customs Tariff Schedule; however, a lower rate could be prescribed through a notification.

- Numerous exemptions of various kinds have complicated the Tariff.
- To simplify the Customs Tariff structure, a number of entries operating through stand-alone notifications would now be operated from the tariff w.e.f 1 May 2022.
- It is anticipated that this would pave the way for a further simple Customs Tariff Regime.

Customs Duty Rate Changes

- The Basic Customs Duty (BCD) has been reduced in respect of some goods to decrease input costs, simplify the rate structure, correct the inverted duty structure, and promote ease of doing business so as to incentivise the domestic value addition in sectors like agriculture, textiles, gems & jewellery, metals, and capital goods.
- BCD has been increased in respect of some goods in order to promote domestic value addition and create a level playing field for the benefit of the farmers, MSME sector, Renewable Energy sector, and the Electronics Sector.

Changes related to the Capital Goods Sector

- Customs duty rates on capital goods and project imports have been calibrated. More than 42 Customs duty exemptions extended to Capital Goods and Project Imports are being phased out to encourage domestic manufacturing and to achieve the objective of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat',

Sectoral Highlights

Electronics Sector

- A graded import duty structure has been prescribed under Phased Manufacturing Programmes (PMPs), in order to promote domestic manufacturing of Wearable devices (smartwatches), Hearable devices (wireless earphones/headphones, portable bluetooth speakers), and Smart metres.
- In order to encourage domestic manufacturing and remove inversion in customs duty rates on key sub-parts of electronic items such as camera lenses for the manufacture of the camera module of cellular mobile and transformers for use in the manufacture of chargers/adapters, etc., has been reduced.

Textile Sector

- There has been a significant tariff simplification in textiles.
- The customs duty structure in textile apparel has been simplified with specific rates being eliminated in a number of items.

Excise Duty Rate Change

- To promote the blending of petrol with ethanol and diesel with biodiesel in the country, an additional excise duty of Rs 2 per litre on unblended petrol and diesel is being levied with effect from 1 October 2022.
- The tax proposals in the Union Budget are a blueprint of this vision.
- Besides, it also expects the taxpayers to join hands with the Government towards its social commitments by coming forward voluntarily for tax compliance.

Harnessing Multiplier Effect

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

GS - III: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Background

- The Union Budget 2022-23, unveiled a transformative approach to invigorate demand and accelerate economic growth.

- The approach relies on boosting capital expenditure, both by the public and the private sector. Capital expenditure is non-recurring, long-term expenditure on creation and acquisition of capital assets.

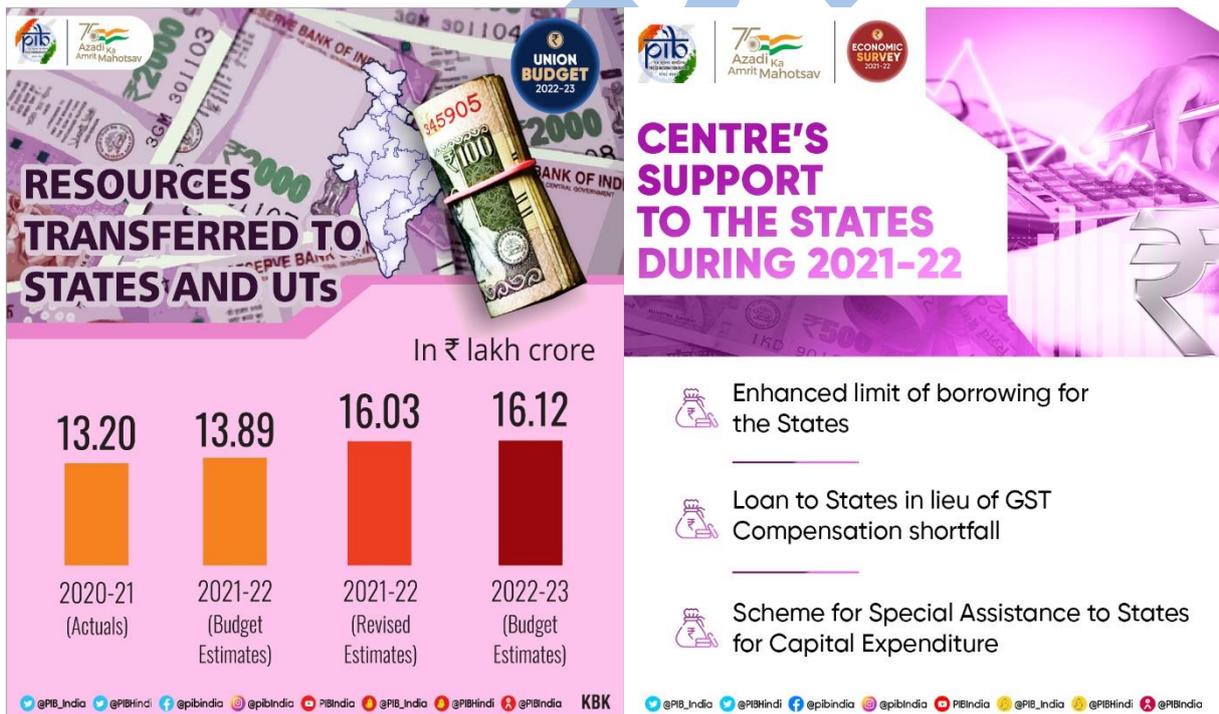
Capital expenditure

- Capital expenditure has the potential to substantially contribute in following:
 - Income augmentation
 - Creates employment opportunities
 - Expands ancillary industries and services
 - Enhances the future productive capacity of the economy
 - Stimulates demand.
 - Public capital expenditure also kicks off a virtuous cycle by crowding in private investment. Moreover, it enhances confidence in the economy and attracts foreign investment.

The Union Budget 2022-23, has proposed a sharp increase of 35.4 per cent in the centre’s capital expenditure outlay from Rs 5.54 lakh crore in 2021-22 to Rs 7.50 lakh crore in 2022-23.

Bolstering Capital Expenditure in State

- During the Covid-19 pandemic, both the Central and the State Governments faced a difficult fiscal environment due to a shortfall in tax revenues.
- Many of the commitments of State Governments like salaries, pensions, and interest payments were fixed in nature and could not be reduced in the short run, Consequently, there was a strong likelihood of postponement of capital expenditure.
- Therefore, despite immense pressure on the central finances, the Union Government decided to extend a special Scheme of assistance to the State Governments in respect of capital expenditure during the financial year 2020-21.



Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure

- The Scheme was named “Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure” and an amount of Rs 12,000 crore was set aside for this purpose.
- Funds were provided under the Scheme in the form of a fifty-year interest-free loan.
- The States could use the funds provided under the Scheme both for new and ongoing capital projects.
- They were also allowed to use the Scheme funds for settling pending bills in ongoing projects.

Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure, Version-1.0

- The inaugural version of the scheme had three parts.

1. **Part -I:** It covered the eight North Eastern and two Hilly States.
2. In this part, while Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh were allocated Rs 450 crore each, Assam was allocated Rs 400 crore.
3. The remaining seven North Eastern States got Rs 200 crore each.
4. **Part-II:** The scheme covered all other States who were assigned a total amount of Rs 7,500 crore.
5. **Part-III:** In part III the scheme, Rs 2,000 crore was set aside to provide an incentive to those States who complete the reforms stipulated by the Ministry of Finance in at least three out of the four identified citizen-centric areas.

Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure, Version-2.0

- The second version of the scheme also has three Parts.
 1. **Part -I:** It focuses on the North Eastern and Hill States.
The former, except Assam were allocated Rs 200 crore each while outlay for Assam, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand was Rs 400 crore each.
 2. **Part-II:** The rest of the States got Rs 7,400 crore, divided amongst them in proportion to their share of Central Taxes as per the award of the 15 Finance Commission.
 3. **Part-III:** The scheme focuses on providing incentives to States for privatisation, disinvestment of the State Public Sector Enterprises (SPSEs) and monetisation of government assets.

Reforms in Identified Citizen-Centric Areas

- The Ministry of Finance had decided to provide an additional borrowing limit of up to 2 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to the Domestic Product (GSDP) to overcome the impact of Covid-19.
- One Nation-One Ration Card system was aimed at enabling people, especially migrant workers to draw their quota of food grains under the National Food Security Act from any fair price shop in the country.
- Ease of Doing Business reforms was aimed at promoting a business-friendly climate in the country to enable faster future growth of the economy.
- Reforms to strengthen local bodies were aimed at augmenting the financial resources of urban local bodies to enable them to provide good civic infrastructure and services to people.

Disinvestment and Monetisation

- In the financial year 2021-22, the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure focussed on improving efficiency and mobilising financial resources by States through privatisation/disinvestment of State Public Sector Enterprises SPSEs and monetisation/recycling of States' assets.
- In the case of strategic disinvestment of SPSEs, the States are entitled to get additional allocation equivalent to 100% of the amount realised.
- Strategic disinvestment means the sale of 50% or more Government shareholding in SPSEs along with the transfer of management control.
- The incentive for State Governments to monetise assets was additional allocation under the scheme equivalent to 33 percent of the realised value of assets.

Way forward

- The Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure has been a success.
- In the financial year 2021-22, against the Budget Estimate of Rs 10,000 crore, capital projects costing Rs 9,115 crore were approved till 3 February 2022, and a total amount of Rs 5,301 crore was released to the States.
- This provided a major relief to the States to achieve progress in a large number of capital projects which would have otherwise stopped due to financial constraints.

Banking and Digital Currency

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

GS - III: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Introduction

- The Special Incentive Scheme as envisaged in the General Budget for the FY 2021-22 with a view of boosting up digital transactions.
- It was felt that the virtual digital assets need to be regulated.
- India is one of the most efficient payment markets in the world.
- An efficient digital transaction ecosystem will give a boost to research, development, and innovation in the Fintech space.

Digital Payment Index

- Before the General Budget, the Reserve Bank of India informed that the Digital Payment Index (RBI-DPI) touched 304.06 in September 2021 which was at 270.59 in March 2021 and was at 173.49 in September 2019.
- Parameters of DPI:
 1. **Payment Enablers**
 2. **Payment – demand-side factors**
 3. **Payment Infrastructure – supply-side factors**
 4. **Payment Performance**
 5. **Consumer Centricity**

The current level of this index shows a massive increase in transactions made through digital platforms and also reflects that the basic system to enable digital transactions has also improved.

Major announcements in Budget

- The Ministry of Finance made five major announcements in the General Budget for the FY 2022-23:
 1. **Continuous financial support to digital payments**
 2. **Digital Banking Unit**
 3. **Core Banking System in Post Offices**
 4. **New Taxation System for Virtual Digital Assets like Cryptocurrency**
 5. **Central Bank Digital Currency**

Continuous Financial Support to Digital Payments

- The Ministry of Finance made a provision of a Special Incentive Scheme in the General Budget for the Financial Year 2021-22 with the view of boosting up digital transactions.
- Under this Scheme, transactions through RuPay Debit Card and of lower amounts (up to Rs 2000) through BHIM UPI will be encouraged.
- According to the Finance Ministry, this Scheme would provide help to the banks in building a strong digital payment ecosystem and in promoting RuPay Debit Card and BHIM UPI digital transactions in all areas and in further strengthening the digital transactions across the country.
- This will give a bigger boost to research, development, and innovation in the Fintech space.

Digital Banking Unit

- There is no doubt that transactions through mobile applications or net banking have increased manifold but a large number of people still have to visit the bank branch.

- The need of the hour is to make use of technology and to provide efficient banking facilities in rural and semi-urban areas.
- Digital Banking Unit (DBU) will be an important step in this direction.
- DBU would be able to provide better and personalised banking services through technology.
- It will provide an opportunity to offer newer services in rural areas and will boost transactions through digital platforms.
- This will be a paperless and end-to-end encrypted service enabling businesses to make transactions instantly without incurring extra expenses.

Core Banking Solution in Post Offices

- The concept of financial adjustment, financial literacy, and financial diversity would be incomplete without the post offices.
- Recently, the Ministry of Finance announced the facility of “Savings in Post Office at any time and at any place”.
- In 2022, the core banking system will get started in all 1.5 lakh post offices which will enable financial inclusion and one would be able to open an account through internet, mobile banking facility, ATM facility, and online money transfer from a post office account to a bank account. This will help in providing interoperability and financial inclusion facility to farmers and senior citizens residing in rural areas.
- CBS is a facility wherein all branches of a bank, a financial institution or any similar organization gets connected through the internet.
- This will also facilitate withdrawal and deposit facilities in schemes like National Savings Certificate (NSC), Public Provident Fund (PPF), Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP), Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, and Post Office Monthly Income Scheme (MIS).

Taxation of Virtual Digital Assets

- Despite repeated alert messages from the Government and the RBI during recent years, people have invested large amounts in cryptocurrency however there is no system to regulate such investments at all.
- It cannot be termed a “currency” because each nation of the world has its own unique currency and despite being in different forms, these currencies are valid and acceptable and are issued by the Central Bank of the respective country.
- The finance minister termed Cryptocurrency as a “Virtual Digital Asset (VDA)” and made three proposals:
 1. Income on all VDA will be taxed at the rate of 30%. There will be no permission for loss adjustment.
 2. TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) at the rate of 1% on VDA transactions will apply so as to facilitate such transactions.
 3. If VDA is received as a gift, then the one receiving the gift will be taxed at market value.

Central Bank Digital Currency

- The Finance Ministry has come up with “Introduction of Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) will give a big boost to the digital economy.
- Digital currency will also lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system.
- For CBDC, a provision to bring an amendment in the Reserve Bank Act, 1934 by introducing a Finance Bill has been made.
- Once this Act is framed, RBI will issue banknotes in any form – physical or digital.
- Digital notes issued by the RBI will be acceptable as a fiat currency just like paper notes or metal coins and these will have legal support.
- It is worth noting that CBDC is just merely another form of legal currency and not a new currency.
- CBDC is presently valid in Nigeria and eight Caribbean countries.
- According to the Finance Ministry, CBDC in India will be in two forms -CBDC-W and CBDC-R.
- The first form will be for wholesale trade and bigger transactions, while the other will be used for retail purposes.



- ₹ RBI to introduce Digital Rupee using Blockchain and other technologies starting 2022-23
- ₹ This will lead to more efficient and cheaper currency management system
- ₹ It will also give boost to digital economy

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Employment and human resource

GS Syllabus Covered

- GS - II:** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
- GS - II:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation
- GS - III:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Introduction

- The Covid-19 pandemic has severely impacted the population globally in their economic well-being and long-term livelihoods.
- While the crisis has taken a toll on all socioeconomic sections, the disadvantaged sections stand more vulnerable due to the augmented risk of informal sector jobs, uncertain incomes and low accessibility to resources, including technology.
- Skill development is a crucial sector relevant to economic growth and reaping India's demographic dividend.

Need for adoption of technology

- The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology, demanded constant innovation, and has changed work environments.
- Modern technologies like AI, Big Data, IoT, Block Chain, 3D Printing & Design, AR/VR, Robotics, Data Sciences, Quantum Computing, and Cyber Security are a few transforming existing businesses.

- The concept of education has transformed from university degrees to life-long learning.
- Even before the pandemic, in many G20 countries, the composition of employment had started shifting towards jobs that required high-level cognitive and socio-emotional skills or were characterised by non-standardised tasks, while jobs with a high routine content were being automated or off-shored to varying degrees.

FICCI Future Skills Report 2020

- As per FICCI Future Skills Report 2020, the five key skills required in the post-Covid era for the manufacturing sector are:
 1. **Data Literacy**
 2. **Digital and Coding**
 3. **Critical thinking**
 4. **Creativity & innovation**
 5. **Technology knowhow**

The Union Budget 2022-23 announced skilling programmes and partnerships with the industry to be reoriented to promote continuous skilling avenues, sustainability, and employability.

National Skill Qualifications Framework

- NSQF was developed before the pandemic, and it is an opportune time to upgrade it as per the industry's requirements.
- Industry participation may extend beyond designing curriculum and giving their inputs on the National Occupational Standards of the NSQF.
- The youth will also get opportunities to skill themselves in Industry 4.0 relevant skills and find the right employment opportunities.



Employment

- It is estimated that 62 per cent of India's population falls in the working-age group and roughly 10 million new job seekers are added each year.
- The country's current labour force participation rate is around 49 per cent.
- To keep up with the growing global pace, India needs to create at least 90 million non-farm jobs between 2020 and 2030.
- The "Digital India" initiative announced in 2015 was a big move to push forward the agenda of getting the workforce 'digitally' skilled and through information technology, empowering citizens, bridging the rural-urban divide, thus improving the government services.

Initiative by government

- The Union Budget 2022-23, has proposed the launch of the Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood – the DESH-Stack e-portal.
- This portal shall aim to empower citizens to skill, reskill or upskill through online training.
- The interlinking of Udyam (a self-declaration portal for entrepreneurs created by MSME), e-SHRAM (a centralised database of unorganised workers created by MoLE), NCS (a portal to connect job seekers, job providers, skill providers, career counsellors created by MoLE), and ASEEM (a portal to facilitate the supply of skilled workforce with the market demand created by MSDE) has come at an opportune time.
- These services will relate to credit facilitation, skilling, and recruitment to formalise the economy further and enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for all.



Human Resource Development

- Human resources act as the driving force in the growth of a nation.
- The skill sets, competencies, knowledge, and attitude are some of the key attributes that help find affordable solutions to complex socio-economic problems.
- According to the "OECD Future of Education and Skills Project 2030", India needs to replace old education standards with an educational framework that combines knowledge with the 21st century skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration.

Way forward

- India's vision of becoming a USD 5-trillion economy is intricately linked with developing the human capital and managing it most efficiently.
- There is a need to involve employers in the delivery of education and designing the Education, Skilling, Employment, and Entrepreneurship (ESEE) ecosystem.
- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has highlighted to create an enabling framework that helps in doing away with "rote-learning" and facilitates acculturation of an enquiry-based, project-led ecosystem of education that not only enhances the learning outcomes but also helps in rendering a more rounded and holistic development of individuals.

Modern and Profitable Agriculture

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

GS - III: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

GS - III: Food processing and related industries in India- scope' and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.

Background

- In India, agriculture is the foremost sector that remained positive and robust amid an unprecedented crisis of the pandemic.
- It maintained a seamless supply chain of essential food items across the country and also successfully met the increased global food demands.
- The agriculture sector registered a growth of 3.6 per cent in 2020-21, which improved to 3.9 per cent in 2021-22.
- As the largest employer of workforce, this sector contributed a sizable 18.8 per cent in (2021-22) in Gross Value Added (GVA) of the country.

Budget allocation for agriculture

- Post-pandemic, agriculture has emerged as the lead player in the recovery process of the national economy.
- In the Union Budget (2022-23), the agriculture sector has been given a major boost to make it more profitable, sustainable, and modern with the welfare of farmers at the core.
- The Finance Ministry underlined the importance of agriculture by announcing a series of new provisions under the broad category of 'Inclusive Development.'

Budget allocation for major schemes

- The budget allocation for the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has been raised by 4.5 per cent to Rs 1,32,513 crore for 2022-23 fiscal.
- The budget allocation for major schemes, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RK VY) got the steepest hike to Rs 10,433 crore (2022-23) from previous Rs 2,000 crore (2021-22, RE).
- The Government has reintroduced Krishi Unnati Yojana (KUY) this year with a different set of 10 schemes and a budgetary allocation of Rs 7,183 crore.
- About 26 per cent of these funds are for the development horticulture sector, whereas 21 per cent of KUY funds are allocated to palm, edible oil, and oilseeds.
- The ambitious welfare Scheme PM-KISAN continues with an allocation of Rs 6,75,000 crore, whereas PM-Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has been allocated Rs 15,500 crore.
- The Government has increased budget allocation for the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying by 44 per cent.
- An increase of 20 per cent in the budget for Rashtriya Gokul Mission and National Programme for Dairy Development will increase the productivity of the indigenous bovine population and quality milk production, benefitting more than eight crore dairy farmers.



RECOMMENDATIONS:-

-  Shift focus towards harnessing potential of allied activities like animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries
-  Develop and implement small holding farm technologies to improve productivity of small and marginal farmers
-  Prioritize crop diversification towards oilseeds, pulses and horticulture
-  Coordinated action from State Governments needed to facilitate shift to high value and less water consuming crops



RECOMMENDATIONS:-

-  Increase in agriculture R&D needed to improve productivity in crop and allied sectors
-  Promote use of alternative fertilizers like nano urea and organic fertilizers
-  Focus on new technology including drones and AI-based decision support system
-  Support start-ups for innovations

National Food Processing Policy

- The Government has earlier released the draft National Food Processing Policy to Increase investment in this sector and promote international competitiveness.
- In Budget proposals, the Government has reiterated its commitment to continue with the MSP (Minimum Support Price) scheme for procurement of crops.
- Through MSP operations, the Government ensures remunerative prices to farmers by procuring produce directly from growers at a predetermined price.
- The Food Corporation of India (FCI) and designated state agencies procure food grains from farmers and manage storage and distribution for supply to more than 80 crore beneficiaries at a highly subsidised rate.
- Under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhtyaan, 2.70 crore eligible farmers have already been issued Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) to avail concessional credit.

Towards High-tech Revolution

- Aiming high-tech revolution to increase efficiency and productivity, the ministry of Finance announced a slew of measures for promoting technology usage in farming systems.
- The government set the vision for the use of “Kisan Drones” for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, spraying of insecticides, and nutrients.
- The ultimate outcome of drone usage translates into higher crop yields with minimisation of time, labour, and expenses.

Digital Sky Platform

- The Government’s ‘Digital Sky Platform’ is facilitating use of drones in various sectors, including agriculture, by providing single-window online clearances for the operation of drones.
- Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has issued funding guidelines to make drone technology affordable by assisting in the purchase, hiring, and demonstration of agriculture drones.
- The Scheme also provisions 75 per cent funding for drone purchase to FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations); and 40 per cent or up to Rs 4 lakhs for specified Custom Hiring Centres.

Agriculture Startup

- To promote startup ecosystems in agriculture, a fund with blended capital will be facilitated through NABARD under the co-investment model.
- This is to finance Startup for agriculture and rural enterprises relevant for the farm produce value chain.
- This will strengthen ongoing startup development programmes of the Government being implemented through – Ministries of Agriculture; Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying; and Science and Technology.

- The Agriculture Skill Council of India is also helping transform Indian agriculture through developing the skills of country manpower in frontier and emerging areas of agriculture and allied sectors.

Chemical-free natural farming

- In the budget proposal, the finance minister made a big announcement, 'chemical-free natural farming will be promoted throughout the country, with a focus on farmers' lands in 5 km wide corridors along river Ganga at the first stage.
- Natural farming systems restore soil fertility and soil organic matter which makes agricultural production sustainable, climate-friendly and cost-effective.
- The Government is supporting and promoting natural farming through a dedicated scheme of 'Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati Programme' (BPKP) which calls for eco-friendly processes in farms.
- The Scheme also provides financial assistance of Rs 1.22.00 per hectare for three years for cluster formation, capacity building, and continuous hand holding by trained personnel, certification, and residue analysis.

National Food Security Mission-Oilseeds

- To reduce India's dependence on import of oilseeds, a comprehensive scheme to increase domestic production of oilseeds will be implemented.
- The Government is already on a mission to increase the production and productivity of oilseeds since 2018-19.
- The National Food Security Mission-Oilseeds is supporting oilseeds growers across the country through critical interventions such as production and distribution of foundation and certified seeds, and distribution of seed minikits of the latest high-yielding varieties.
- Further, a National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm was launched in August 2021 aiming for enhancement in the area of oil palm through price incentives.
- Oil Palm is a high potential crop that produces 10 to 46 times more oil per hectare compared to other oilseeds crops.
- The newly proposed comprehensive scheme is likely to make a paradigm shift in oilseed production in the country.

Way forward

- Agriculture and allied sectors are one of the main pillars of the national economy with far-reaching impacts on various other economic sectors.
- The Centre will provide support for implementation after the consensus among beneficiary states.
- Budget proposals would go a long way in ensuring that agriculture continues to contribute significantly to India's growth story.
- The present Budget is a right step in realising the ultimate goal of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' with higher agricultural growth and enhanced income for farmers.

Green Economy

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

GS - III: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Introduction

- The union Budget 2022-23 has laid emphasis that Climate Change was being one of the highest external negativities facing the country and the Government was committed to a strategy of low carbon footprint.
- The budget underlined the importance accorded to sustainability and decarbonisation goals by the Government.

National Clean Air Programme

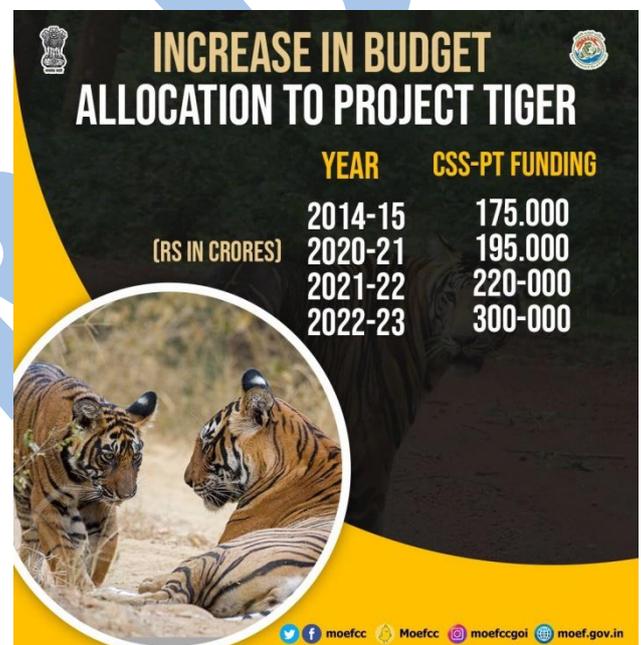
- Implementation of clean air policy was undertaken considering the challenge posed due to growing air pollution reported in the large cities.
- However, despite three years into the launch of NCAP in 2019, analysis of pollution levels shows there has been a marginal decrease in pollution levels in targeted cities.
- It also shows an insufficient expenditure of funds by the States to ensure air pollution reduction.

Budgetary Allocation

- In 2022-23, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has been allocated Rs 3030 crore, which is an annual increase of 3.6% over the budget allocation in 2021-22.
- In 2021-22, the Ministry was allocated Rs 2869 crore.
- The Scheme-Control of Pollution has been conceptualised to provide financial assistance to Pollution control Boards/Committees and financing to National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- There is no mention of budget allocation earmarked for NCAP in the expenditure budget.

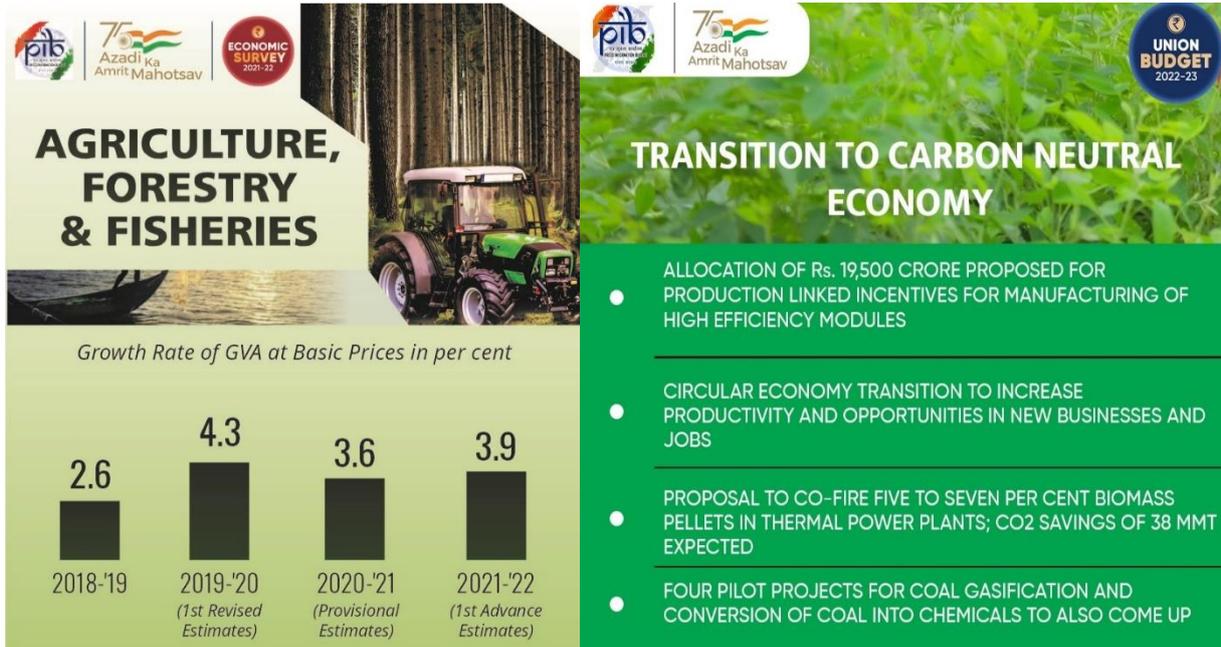
Allocation to various scheme

- Allocation for the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), responsible for tackling pollution around the country, remained static at Rs 100 crore.
- The allocation for the National Mission for a Green India, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), has been raised from Rs 290 crore (in this fiscal) to Rs 361 crore.
- In the wildlife arena, the government-initiated projects – Project Tiger and Project Elephant saw some changes with the former getting reduced by Rs 30 crore and the other being reduced by Rs 1 crore.
- The budget allocation for the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a statutory body under the Ministry of MoEFCC responsible for tiger census and conservation of wild cats, is Rs 10 crore which remains the same as in the current fiscal.
- The allocation for the National Coastal Mission has been made Rs 195 crore in the year 2022-23 compared to Rs 200 crore in the current fiscal.
- Under the National Coastal Mission, MoEFCC is responsible to ensure livelihood security of coastal communities including fisher folks to conserve, protect the coastal stretches, and to promote sustainable development based on scientific principles.



Policy Initiatives

- The Ministry of Finance has allocated Rs 1950 crore for the Production Link Initiative for the manufacture of high efficiency modules with primary to fully integrated manufacturing units from polysilicon to solar PV modules.
- The Government would introduce a policy for battery swapping which would give a boost to the domestic EV industry especially on the public transport.
- EVs on the roads are an important part of the Government's plan to reduce carbon emissions from transport.



Biomass pellets

- Other initiatives in the Budget announced include: 5% to 7% biomass pellets will be co-fired in thermal power plants resulting in CO₂ savings of 38 MMT annually.
- This will also help avoid stubble burning in the northern States.
- Additionally, energy efficiency and savings measures will be promoted.
- This will be done in large commercial buildings through the business model.

Financial support

- Financial support will be provided to farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who want to take up agroforestry under the scheme.
- The action plans for ten sectors such as electronic waste, end-of-life vehicles, used-oil waste, and toxic and hazardous industrial waste are in the pipeline.

India's commitments

- India pledged in the Paris agreement to generate 40% of India's power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources and create an additional 'carbon sink' of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030.
- According to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), as of 31 December 2021, the share of non-fossil sources in the installed capacity of electricity generation was 40.20%.
- The report of IFRS 2021, points out that forest cover has been increasing in India.

Way forward

- The institutions engaged in regulatory functioning both at the Central Govt and States" level need to be strengthened in maintaining environmental-regulation standards in large cities/urban centres.
- The research activities into restoring biodiversity, conserving landscapes, and preserving the natural balance biodiversity pan India will have to be encouraged.
- To a large extent, an effective regulation system will reduce pollution at various levels.

KURUSHETRA

INDEX

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- Growth and Employment
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*The table of content is segregated as per its relevance with respect to Mains Syllabus of CSE Examination.
* The article mention under GS paper in table of content might be important for many other topics in GS Papers as well.
* The details relevance of each article/Topics with respect to GS syllabus has been mention at the starting of each article.

GENERAL STUDIES – I

Nari and Yuva Shakti

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - I: Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

GS - II: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Introduction

- India is among the top nations with the youngest population in the world with a median age of 28-29 years.
- At present, 55.8 percent of the Indian population is in the working age group of 20-59 years among which nearly half of them are women.
- India has a double advantage of women and youth power.

Budgetary outlay

- The Union Budget 2022 has put immense emphasis on capital expenditure with an increase of 35.4 percent in the capital expenditure outlay to Rs. 7.5 lakh crores to boost the economy and create more economic opportunities especially for women and youth.
- It is equally remarkable for its far-sighted emphasis on building the social infrastructure by focusing on children and women.
- The Budget 2022 precisely creates enabling support structures for women and youth through a life cycle approach.

Nari Shakti: From Foundations to Employment

1. Early Childhood Development

- According to research studies, over 80 percent of a child's cumulative brain development happens by the age of 3 years.
- The National Education Policy 2020 highlights that over 85 percent of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6 years.
- This indicates the critical importance of appropriate care, nutrition and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth.

1.1 PM POSHAN 2.0

- Mission POSHAN 2.0 is an Integrated Nutrition Support Programme.
- It is a prenatal stage that plays a critical role in the fetal brain development.
- In this regard the PM POSHAN 2.0 is a welcome step in addressing long-standing issues of prenatal and early childhood development and supporting mothers.
- The mission seeks to address the challenges of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a strategic shift in nutrition content.
- The focus area of the mission is on maternal nutrition, infant and young child feeding norms, treatment of MAM/SAM and Wellness through AYUSH.

2. Making Children School Ready

- As per an Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) report, approx. 30 percent children in India are school ready.
- Nearly 43 percent of students in class 1 are unable to recognise letters in rural India.
- The National Education Policy 2020 has laid down the roadmap to energise pre-school education in India.

- The Budget 2022 has taken a leap forward in this direction to fill in the gaps by announcing to create 2 lakh SAKSHAM Anganwadis in the country.
- Saksham Anganwadis have the potential in creating 'Saksham Balikas and Saksham Balaks' who will be school ready.

3. High Quality school Education

- The National Education Policy 2020 is one of its first kind of documents that accepted the fact that there is a learning crisis in the country even before the COVID-19 pandemic began.
- As per the ASER study, the existing digital divide, however, compounded the equity in access to education.
- Considering the situations, the centre has announced the PM eVIDYA which unifies all efforts related to digital on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education.

3.1 Government interventions

- The Budget 2022 announced to increase the **One Class-One TV channel programme** under the **PM eVIDYA scheme** from 12 television channels to a total of 200 channels is an attempt to solve the problem of access and language.
- **Radio broadcasting** is being used for children in remote areas who don't have access to the internet.
- Around 289 **Community Radio Stations** have also been used to broadcast content for NIOS for grades 9 to 12.
- A Podcast called **Shiksha Vani** is being effectively used by learners of grades 9 to 12.
- 'One Class-One TV channel' was launched to cater to the students from class 1 to 12 who didn't have access to smart devices and the internet.
- High-quality e-content in all spoken languages will be developed for delivery via **internet, mobile phones, TV and radio through Digital Teachers.**

4. Building Capacity for Employment

- The employability in India has increased from 37.22 percent in 2015 to 45.9 percent in 2021.
- The National Skill Development Corporation has worked with the Ministry of Education to restructure the implementation model of skill development training in schools.
- The Budget 2022 puts emphasis on promoting critical thinking and creativity especially in vocational education.
- It has been proposed that 750 virtual labs in science and mathematics and 75 skilling e-labs for a simulated learning environment will be set up during the year 2022-23 itself.

4.1 DESHStack e-portal

- The Union Budget 2022 has taken a leap forward in this direction in the form of DESHStack e-portal.
- The DESH-Stack e-portal (Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood) aims to empower citizens to skill, reskill or upskill through online training.
- It provides API-based trusted skill credentials, payment and discovery layers to find relevant jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- The portal is a complete solution for the youth.

Conclusion

- Unlike the physical infrastructure, social transformation is slower, amorphous and therefore less amenable to concrete measurements.
- The Prime Minister's clarion calls for 'Sabka Prayas' is a necessary condition for success.
- The active and concerted efforts of all the stakeholders can help ensure effective implementation, real and timely feedback to inform further iterations in sync with the ground realities.
- A visionary initiative, however exceptional, is still the first step of a long journey.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

Growth and Employment

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Introduction

- After the serious economic repercussions due to Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, India gets back on track to achieve its goal of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy.
- The COVID-19 crisis was an urgent reminder of the structural vulnerabilities that India has faced.
- During the pandemic lockdown India was at risk of a decade of rising unemployment and economic stagnation.

Recovery roadmap in Budget

- The Union Budget 2022- 2023 has set the stage for transforming India through this Amrit Kaal.
- The first goal of the Amrit Kaal is complementing macro-economic growth with micro-economic all-inclusive welfare.
- The key to such a transformation lies in a technology-driven approach.
- It can be achieved via advanced technology and foster innovation through structural reforms.
- The budget has highlighted the sunrise opportunities for India which include:
 1. **Artificial Intelligence**
 2. **Geospatial Systems and Drones**
 3. **Semiconductor and its ecosystem**
 4. **Space Economy**
 5. **Genomics and Pharmaceuticals**
 6. **Green Energy**
 7. **Clean Mobility Systems**

Minimum Government and Maximum Governance

- The principles of Minimum Government and Maximum Governance have already been a series of reforms repealing outdated compliances and laws.
- The next stage must focus on:
 - Standardisation and removal of overlapping compliances
 - Complete digitisation of manual processes and physical records
 - Creation of single point access systems and single window clearance systems which will accelerate business processes and boost productivity in the industry.

Government interventions

- Improved access to credit can help MSMEs to accelerate India's path to become a USD 5 trillion economy.
- The extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) will boost the hospitality and related industry and the revamped Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) will serve to expand employment opportunities.
- The PM Gati Shakti Mission for economic growth and sustainable development has been taken in the Union Budget 2022-23.
- The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan will encompass the seven engines for economic transformation, seamless multimodal connectivity and logistics efficiency.

- This will help raise productivity, and accelerate economic growth and development.
- Reforms in five areas can raise productivity and competitiveness, these include:
- sector-specific policies to improve productivity in manufacturing, real estate, agriculture, healthcare, and retail
- Enabling efficient power distribution to reduce commercial and industrial tariffs by 20 to 25 percent.
- Privatising the largest State-owned enterprises to potentially double their productivity.

Focusing on three key themes

- India's business leaders must help to restore the country to a high-growth path.
- That will require focus on three key themes.

First, firms would need to raise aspirations and commit to productivity growth through business ideas based on the sunrise sectors.

- The choice of which opportunities to commit to would vary for each company, but making bold investments in a few areas will be critical in order to be a winner and shape India's high-productivity economy in the coming decade.

Second, businesses need to develop a long-term value creation mindset coupled with a strong performance-oriented culture.

- This implies adopting a forward-looking approach to investment, building an organisational culture that focuses on long-term value creation, and articulating a shared vision and purpose with accountability to all stakeholders.

Third, firms will need a set of winning capabilities if they are to emerge as large, high growth, globally competitive businesses. These are as follows:

- Operational Excellence and Scalable Platforms:** Firms across sectors will need to ramp up digital and data capabilities to create lean, scalable operating platforms.
 - Such measures could go from installing digital architecture for back-offices, digitising supply chains, and moving customer sales and service interfaces online.
- Customer-centric Innovation:** Both large and small firms across sectors need to build capabilities that enable razor-sharp understanding and focus on customer needs along with innovation, localisation and tailoring for India, along the value chain of product design, pricing, distribution and the back-end.
- Ability to be Ahead of the Curve and Win in Discontinuities:** Critical capabilities for firms of the future will be reshaping established business practices, fostering creativity and nimbleness and making bold capital allocation decisions.
- Well-executed Mergers, Acquisitions, and Partnerships:** Firms need to build their mergers and acquisition and partnership muscle and learn how to capture value by consolidating disaggregated and distributed players.

Conclusion

- India is at a turning point and facing the challenge of driving the sunrise sectors to supply sustained high-growth rates while creating 90 million jobs over the next decade, the country will need to implement significant reforms across the economy.
- At a time when the global economy has taken severe knocks from the COVID-19 pandemic, restoring 8.0 to 8.5 percent GDP growth is an ambitious goal.

Strengthening Rural Economy

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Background

- Strengthening of the rural economy holds a special significance in the overall socio-economic development of a country.
- In India nearly two-third of total population reside in rural areas.
- The major economic problems faced by the rural people are poverty, unemployment and inequality.
- The Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal ministry to promote welfare activities in rural India.
- It takes steps to increase livelihood opportunities, providing social safety nets and improving infrastructure in rural areas for rapid growth.

Budget allocation for rural development

- The Ministry of Rural Development has been provided the seventh highest allocation across all Ministries.
- The allocation has surged up from Rs. 61,864 crores in 2013-14 to Rs.1,38,204 crore in 2022-23.
- The Department of Rural Development, which accounts for more than 98 percent of funds of the Ministry, witnessed a growth rate of 10.56 percent per annum in its allocation during the last decade.

Schemes under the Department of Rural Development

- The total budget allocation to all centrally sponsored schemes for rural development went up from Rs. 1,11,842 crore to Rs. 1,35,539 crore witnessing a growth rate of 5.48 percent per annum during the last five years.
- But it came down by 11.53 per cent in 2022-23 as compared to the previous year.

1) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) aims to strengthen the livelihood resource base of the poor by providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment per year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- The scheme was introduced in 2005 through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.
- Presently, it covers all the almost 716 rural districts of the country.
- Over the past couple of years, the scheme has emerged as the essential safety net for many rural workers who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In the union budget 2022-23, the allocation for the MGNREGS has been slashed nearly by 25 percent accounting Rs. 73,000 crore as compared to Rs. 98,000 crore of revised expenditure of 2021-22.

2) Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana -Gramin (PMAY-G) has been provided the second highest allocation in the union budget 2022-23.
- The scheme aims to provide affordable housing to the rural poor through financial assistance for construction of a dwelling unit.
- According to the finance ministry over 80 lakh houses will be constructed and delivered by the year 2023 to the eligible poor.

3) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

- The scheme is the third most important scheme of rural development.
- The core objective of the scheme is to promote economic activities in rural India by providing all-weather road connectivity to the eligible un-connected rural habitations.
- The scheme has been allocated Rs 19,000 crore in 2022-23, accounting for nearly 14 percent of the total budget of the Department of Rural Development.

4) National Rural Livelihoods Mission

- The National Rural Livelihoods Mission was launched in June 2011.
- It was later renamed as Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) in 2016.
- The mission aims at creating diversified and gainful self-employment to the rural poor through **sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services**.
- The scheme seeks to promote and strengthen the SHGs which in turn are expected to mediate the livelihoods of the rural poor.

5) National Social Assistance Programme

- NSAP is a welfare programme which comprises many sub-schemes aimed at providing public assistance to citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and any form of disability. The scheme has been in existence since 1995.
- The major schemes under this programme include Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension National Family Benefit Scheme and Annapurna Scheme.

6) Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission

- The mission was launched in 2016 with a unique programme and designed to deliver catalytic interventions to rural areas, on the threshold of growth.
- It aims at developing clusters of villages that preserve and nurture the essence of rural community life with focus on equity and inclusiveness without compromising the facilities perceived to be essentially urban in nature.
- The main objective is to bridge the rural-urban divide viz; economic, technological and those related to modern facilities for stimulating local economic development with emphasis on employment generation in rural areas.

7) Income support to farmers

- With a view to provide income support to the farmer families across the country, the government has launched Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Yojana.
- It was launched to augment the income of farmers with land holding up to 2 hectares, subject to certain exclusions.
- The scheme aims at supplementing the financial needs of the families of small and marginal farmers to enable them to take care of expenses related to their occupation as well as domestic needs.
- Under the scheme the government provides Rs 6,000 to each beneficiary in three equal instalments to the eligible farmers.
- In the union budget 2022-23, a substantial amount of Rs 68,000 crore, was allocated for PM-KISAN, which is nearly 55 percent of the total budget of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Future Initiatives

- India is primarily a rural economy with economic inequalities and resource constraints, it is essential to promote economic activities through various incentives in rural areas.
- To attract unemployed educated youth to agriculture, agribusiness and agri-preneurship, impetus on creating scientific temper and fostering innovative spirit among the rural youth is the need of the hour.
- Public expenditure on social infrastructure is also needed to be prioritised to promote sustainable and inclusive growth.
- Focus on public investment in human capital is needed to be enhanced to bring social changes in the desired direction.
- It is imperative to improve educational standards, skilling the rural youth, empowering women, providing affordable healthcare to all and enhancing job opportunities in a big way.
- Private sector and self-help-groups supported by the public at large can play a vital role in boosting economic activities and ultimately enhancing employment opportunities in rural India.

Conclusion

- There is a need for a balanced regional development with focus on rural areas has always been at the top of development agenda in India.
- The main focus is on strengthening the rural economy by reviving agriculture and allied sectors in rural India.

- In the union budget 2022-23, liberal funds have been provided for generating income and employment in rural areas through substantial investment and increased public expenditure on the schemes and programmes formulated for this purpose.

Sustainable Agri-preneurship

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS - III: Food processing and related industries in India- scope' and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.

Introduction

- Agriculture continues to be a major source of livelihood in the rural economy and during the intense and prolonged lockdown period.
- It has created sustainable livelihood and entrepreneurial avenues for women, youth and marginalised sections of the society in rural areas.
- Agriculture is contributing about 20 percent to national GDP.
- There is a renewed and enhanced focus on agriculture and allied activities to energise the local economy and build a self-reliant India.

Entrepreneurship development

- Entrepreneurship development, especially in agriculture and allied activities, agro-based industries, food processing sectors, etc. can ensure sustainable livelihoods and create employment opportunities for local people in the midst of a pandemic.
- To attract youth into agriculture, it has to be transformed into a vibrant and tech-savvy sector by introducing robotics, ICT and nanotechnology. Agri Entrepreneurship, food processing and value chain development will also encourage youth into agriculture.
- It is high time the government should increase public investment on crucial agriculture infrastructure, including irrigation, cold storage, market linkages, and mechanisation, inter alia, to enable farmers to take up high-value agriculture.

National Start-up Day

- This year 16 January was celebrated as the National Start-up Day, to strengthen innovation, entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem.
- It was also envisaged to liberate entrepreneurship, innovations from government processes, bureaucratic silos and create institutional mechanisms to promote innovations.

Focus Area

- **Simplification of tax procedures**
- **Removal of more than 25,000 compliances**
- **Arranging government funding**
- **Hand Holding young innovators and young enterprises**
- **Making lives of entrepreneurs easy**

Provisions Under the Budget

- The Union budget, 2022-23 has made many significant provisions to put agriculture on a sustained higher growth trajectory.
- It also encourages agri-startups and entrepreneurial activities in agriculture and allied activities. Adequate emphasis has been accorded on digital infrastructure for infusion of agriculture technologies in public private partnership (PPP) modes.

- Promoting chemical-free natural farming
- Use of Kisan Drones for crop assessments, land records, spraying of insecticides and micronutrients, etc will bring transformative changes in the agriculture sector.
- The Government's push towards digitalisation of agriculture coupled with the focus on hi-tech services to enhance rural entrepreneurship.

Measures proposed by government

- The centre has proposed various measures to streamline the agri-value chain and enhance farm productivity:
- Tax incentives for agribusiness start-ups will benefit the overall agriculture sector
- Provisioning of funds through NABARD for agri-startups and rural enterprises
- Multiple exemptions are also being rationalised on tools for the agri sector which are manufactured in India.
- Focus on millets and increasing the domestic production of oilseeds

Programmes and Schemes

1) RKVY-RAFTAAR

- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied Sectors Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR) is another unique scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- It aims at strengthening infrastructure in agriculture and allied sectors to promote agri-preneurship and agribusiness by facilitating financial aid and nurturing a system of business incubation.
- Under this scheme, efforts are being made to provide all necessary support to start as well as scale up agribusiness and agri startups.
- It includes capacity building in preparing business plans, personalised mentoring, funding opportunities, regulatory and advisory guidance, support to get IPRs or patents, and so on.

2) Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY) is a scheme under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- The program aims to:
 1. Create effective backward and forward linkages by linking groups of producers / farmers to the processors and markets through a well-equipped supply chain.
 2. Provide integrated and complete preservation infrastructure facilities from the farm gate to the consumer
 3. Create modern infrastructure for food processing closer to production areas

3) PM FME Scheme

- The centre has recently announced PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PM FME Scheme) which aims at providing financial, technical and business support for upgradation of existing micro food processing enterprises.
- It provides support of capital investment for upgradation and for formalisation with registration for GST, FSSAI hygiene standards and Udyog Aadhar.
- Under this scheme, skill training and hand holding support is also provided to prepare bankable business plans, Support towards capital investment, common infrastructure such as Common Facility Centres, and branding and marketing are also provided to FPOs, SHGs and PCs to formalise and grow.

4) Student READY

- To promote agri entrepreneurship among youths, Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) Programme is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- It aims to provide:
 1. Experiential Learning with business mode
 2. Hands-on training (HOT)/ Skill development training
 3. Rural Awareness Work Experience (RAWWE)
 4. Internship/ In Plant Training/ Industrial attachment
 5. Students Projects

5) Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres Scheme

- Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (AC&ABC) Scheme aims to supplement efforts of public extension by providing extension and other services to farmers either on payment basis or free-of-cost as per business model of agri-preneurship, local needs, and affordability of target group of farmers.
- It also aims at creating gainful self-employment opportunities for unemployed agricultural graduates.
- Under this scheme, the government is now also providing start-up training to graduates in Agriculture, or any subject allied to agriculture like Horticulture, Sericulture, Veterinary Sciences, Forestry, Dairy, Poultry Farming, and Fisheries, etc.

Way forward

- Agri-enterprises and start-ups will not only lead to employment creation, especially for the rural youths, but also will contribute to enhancing the income of farmers.
- There is a need to formulate some new skills, keeping in mind the specific requirements of the farm sector and associated activities.
- The goal of self-reliant India can be achieved when a vibrant rural India is in place and a shift from 'agriculture' to 'agri-entrepreneurship' is the only imperative,
- It is important to enhance the access to information and support for these enterprises and provide all support measures on a single platform.



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GENERAL STUDIES - III

Agriculture Development

GS Syllabus Covered

- GS - II:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- GS - III:** Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, - different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; technology in the aid of farmers.
- GS - III:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Background

- In India, agriculture and allied sectors account for 18.8 percent of Gross Value Added (GVA) in the economy.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic the agriculture sector was the least impacted in comparison to the services and industry sectors of the economy.
- Against a pre-pandemic GVA growth rate of 4.3 percent in 2019-20, it is expected to achieve the growth rate of 3.9 percent in 2021-22.

Economic Survey recommendations

- The Economic Survey 2021-22 has highlighted the resilience in the agriculture sector during the past two years.
- The survey has emphasis to look into various factors for propelling growth which include:
 1. Needs of timely and adequate availability of rural and agri-finance
 2. Access to other agri-inputs and services
 3. Adequacy in insurance coverage and risk mitigation
 4. Marketability of products
 5. Crop diversification and advocated gradual shift from the cultivation of water-intensive crops like sugarcane and paddy to cotton, horticulture, nutri-cereals, pulses and oilseeds.

Pre-Budget Expectations

- The pre-budget anticipation ranged from revival of rural farm and non-farm sector through all-encompassing infrastructure and investment push to attracting invention and innovation in the field of agriculture.
- The pre-budget expectation was to witness acceleration in growth, making farming remunerative so that it can create remunerative job opportunities in the rural areas to absorb the mounting labour force.

The Budget has focused on

1. **Increasing oilseeds production**
2. **Encouraging production of nutri-cereals like millets**
3. **Increasing technological intervention**
4. **Reduction in farm imports**
5. **Adoption of chemical-free natural farming practices**

The prime objective behind these interventions is to guarantee incremental income, employment and in improving agriculture value chains and supply chains.

Budget Allocation to Agriculture

- The Union Budget 22-23 reaffirmed its goal to transform the farm business into a remunerative one by bringing in modernisation into agriculture input supplies and services, improving technology penetration, enhancing marketability of the farm and attracting investments into innovations in agriculture.
- The budget allocation of Rs. 15,500 crores to Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) would help in mitigating risks in agriculture activities.
- PMFBY targets to cover 65 lakh farmers in 22-23, with a coverage of 4.2 crore hectare of crop area.
- Budget allocation of Rs. 500 crore each to promotion of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) schemes would ensure increased credit availability and creating better agri-infrastructure in rural areas.
- Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) focuses on food security, sustainable agriculture, oilseed production, agri-extension, etc.
- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) – per drop more crop, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), National Project on Soil Health, Rainfed Area Development and Climate Change, Sub-Mission on Agriculture Mechanisation including management of crop residues have been merged.

Promotion of Nutri-Cereals

- The Union Government has underscored the importance of nutri-cereals like millets which can meet the nutrition requirements of the citizens.
- The budget has promised to provide support for post-harvest value addition, enhancing domestic consumption and facilitating brand and market development of the millet-based products nationally and internationally looking at the growing demand for these nutritional agri-products.

Minimum Support Prices for Agriculture

- The centre in the budget has noted that both the Rabi wheat and Kharif paddy procurement in respective 2021-22 seasons could be an estimated 12.08 million metric tonnes.
- This would benefit 163 lakh farmers. The consequent effort would lead to the pay-outs of Rs. 2.37 lakh crore towards MSP value of such procurements directly payable at the farmers' accounts.
- This would guarantee national food security and enhanced income in the hands of the farmers.

Technology Infusion in Agriculture

- The union budget attempts to roll-out integrated and feasible tech-solutions to digitise agri-markets, rural markets and sub-markets, payment systems, workflows leading to subsidy disbursements to beneficiary farmers, etc.
- The government proposes to promote extensive use of 'Kisan Drones' for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, spraying of insecticides, pesticides and nutrients, etc.
- The 'KisanSarathi' digital platform will improve the farmers' capability to negotiate and discover appropriate and just price, and consolidate their products for both the regulated and unregulated markets.
- The government announces launching of a scheme on PPP mode to extend delivery of digital and high-tech services to farmers through private agri-tech players and agri-value chain stakeholders.

Promoting Agri-Tech Startups

- The Union budget announced a National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) funded scheme to promote agri-tech startups focusing on diverse aspects of agriculture.
- NABARD will set up a blended capital fund under the co-investment model to financially support the agriculture startups and rural enterprises.
- This initiative would provide assistance for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiencies of agri-produce value chains.

Promotion of Natural Farming

- The Budget advocated to promote chemical free natural farming throughout the nation.
- To begin with, farmers' land in 5 km wide corridors along the river Ganga would be selected for promotion of natural farming practices.

- Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) encouraged promotion of traditional indigenous practices including natural farming.
- Currently, 4.09 lakh hectares have been covered under natural farming.

Digitisation of Agriculture Cooperatives

- In order to provide seamless, hassle-free and cost-effective credit flow to the farmers, the budget allocated Rs. 350 crores to digitise 63,000 primary agricultural credit societies (PACs) out of a total of 95,509 PACs in the country.
- The scheme aims at computerisation of functional community-owned, democratically governed, member driven cooperatives with a view to enhance their governance and operational efficiency.

Conclusion

- The Union budget 2022-23 has emphasised on attracting investment in research and innovation through bringing in a startup culture in agriculture.
- The efforts of the government directed towards facilitating infrastructure for agri-value chains, integrating FPOs, Cooperatives and private sector agri-tech players through startups, simplifying the use of drone technology for crop production, monitoring and assessments and laying focus on promotion of nutri-cereals like millets, are futuristic and have the capabilities to ensure adequate crop diversification by the farmers.
- The proposed initiatives and investments in various key areas of agri-development have the required potential to re-orient the farm economy.

Transforming Industrial Ecosystem

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

GS - III: Food processing and related industries in India- scope' and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.

Introduction

- It has been close to two years that the world has been in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic and its various manifestations and repercussions.
- Different economies have resorted to different fiscal and monetary mechanisms to cope with the challenges that have been thrown up.
- In such an exacting situation, it is not an easy task to balance demand and supply; and match Government receivables with Government expenditure, especially because while all the components of expenditure may be important, they need to be prioritised.

Budget 2022-23 for Industries

- The Union budget 2022-23 has laid the foundation of the long-term vision of the Government.
- Its approach has rightly been to continue to provide support to vulnerable sectors.
- The Economic Survey 2021-22 states that India's GDP growth during 2021-22 is projected to be 9.2 percent, following a contraction of 7.3 percent in 2020-21.
- This is the highest projection amongst the large economies.

1. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

- The Atma Nirbhar Bharat package announced in 2020 had a combination of potent announcements for the MSMEs.
- These included:
 1. **Revision in the definition of MSMEs**
 2. **Facilitating the ease of registering for MSMEs through the Udyam portal**
 3. **Making credit available through the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme**

4. **Special scheme for MSMEs with stressed assets**
5. **Scheme for equity infusion**

1.1) Udyam and ECLGS

- The Budget proposes to strengthen the effectiveness of at least two of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat components, viz. Udyam and ECLGS.
- Udyam registration certificate helps MSMEs to avail benefits of Ministry of MSME's schemes and those of Priority Sector Lending (PSL) of banks.
- The Budget has proposed to interlink the Udyam portal with:
 1. **ASEEM (Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee- Employer Mapping)**, which is an artificial intelligence-based portal which helps in finding sustainable livelihood opportunities.
 2. **E-shram** which is a centralised database of unorganised workers seeded with Aadhaar
 3. **National Career Service** which is a one stop solution that provides a wide array of employment and career related services to the citizens

2. Skill Development

- The Skill development program by the government is essential to benefit from the demographic dividend in India.
- The Budget has announced the aligning of the National Skill Qualification Framework, the launch of Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood and 'Drone Shakti' that are sync with the industry's needs.

3. Infrastructure

- The Budget has recognised the investments to yield meaningful and targeted returns.
- The Gati Shakti scheme proposes a comprehensive expanded road map across national highways, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways, logistics infrastructure, energy transmission, IT communication, bulk water and sewerage, and social infrastructure.
- The Budget has also laid stress on public and private capital and through PPP mode, including assistance from multilateral agencies.

3.1 Production Linked Incentive scheme

- The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme was launched in 2020 with the objective of boosting domestic manufacturing in sunrise and strategic sectors, improving cost competitiveness of domestically manufactured goods, enhancing domestic capacity and economies of scale, and attracting investment.

4. Business Facilitation

- The Government has been continuously striving towards providing an enabling environment for business to flourish.
- The centre has proposed to launch the Ease of Doing Business 2.0 where States will also be involved and integrated into the current system.
- The proposals of expanding the PARIVESH portal, issuance of e-passports, adopting Unique Land Parcel Identification Number and 'One Nation One Registration' software are further steps in adopting digital means for facilitating businesses and helping citizens.
- The Budget has proposed the establishment of Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE) to ease out the exit process for companies.
- The Budget has proposed that any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset shall be taxed at the rate of 30 percent.

5. Investments

- The Economic Survey, 2021-22 indicates that Gross Fixed Capital Formation will grow at 15 percent in 2021-22 and reach the pre-pandemic level.
- The Capital expenditure has been enhanced in the Union budget 2022-23.
- To strengthen the States the outlay of the Scheme for Financial Assistance to States for Capital Investment has been increased from Rs. 10,000 crores in 2021-22 to Rs. 15,000 crores in 2022-23.

Conclusion

- The Union Budget 2022-23 has focused on inclusive growth, economic recovery and employment generation.
- The announcements propose to address the pre- Budget expectations of the industry related to investments; infrastructure; revival of MSME ecosystem; and creation of jobs.
- The centre has proposed many forward-looking announcements which are based on integrating and strengthening the digital economy, including promotion of research and development.

Accelerating Tech Transformation

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Introduction

- The Union Budget 2022-23 reflects a grand vision for a self-reliant India.
- This budget is envisioned as transformative as it represents a new thinking towards development, connectivity, infrastructure, innovation, business, industrialisation and growth.
- Information and communication technologies are being increasingly referred to as an integral part of the government's approach.
- Ambitious projects such as Bharat Net (National Optical Fiber Network) and Digital India have already made their impact felt in rural India.

Building Digital Infrastructure

- The digital infrastructure includes everything from agriculture, to education, to health and other industries.
- The government plans a roadmap to enhance broadband and mobile services in rural and remote areas of the country.
- In order to enable affordable broadband and mobile services proliferation in rural and remote areas, the Budget has proposed to allocate five percent of annual collections under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

1. Universal Service Obligation Fund

- In India, the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), formed by an Act of Parliament, was established under the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act 2003 to provide financial support for the provision of telecom services in commercially unviable rural and remote areas of the country.
- USOF is the pool of funds generated by the 5 percent Universal Service Levy that is charged upon all the telecom fund operators on their Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR).
- This fund is deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India and is dispatched on the approval of the Indian Parliament.
- The government will allocate 5 percent of the annual collections under the Universal Service Obligations Fund to enable broadband and mobile services in the rural and remote areas of the country.
- This step will provide and promote research and development, and commercialisation of technology and solutions.

2. Bharat Net

- Bharat Net previously known as the National Optical Fiber Network has been launched by the government of India under the Digital India program.
- The initiative aims to provide high-speed digital connectivity of the internet in rural areas at a very affordable price.
- It is the world's largest rural broadband connectivity project.
- The government will take measures to enable better and more efficient use of optical fiber across the country.

- This is expected to be completed in 2025.

2.1 Extension of Bharat Net

- The Union cabinet approved a plan to extend Bharat Net to 3,60,000 villages in 16 states.
- The cabinet also approved the extension of Bharat Net to inhabited villages in rest of the states and UTs as well.
- To ensure timely implementation and wider coverage of the plan, the government had also revised its strategy to implement the program, more specifically to go by the PPP route.

2.2 Bharat Broadband Network Limited

- It is also a flagship mission implemented by Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) which is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) set up by the Government of India under the Companies Act, 1956 with an authorised capital of Rs. 1,000 crore.
- It is a highly scalable network infrastructure accessible on a non-discriminatory basis, to provide on demand, affordable broadband connectivity of 2 Mbps to 20 Mbps for all households and on demand capacity to all institutions, to realise the vision of Digital India.
- The SPV is being implemented by the Department of Telecommunication under the Ministry of Communications.

3. Innovation Hubs

- The centre is of the opinion that the start-ups have the power to transform the socio-economic face of rural India.
- The Union Budget symbolises a relatively new and innovative vision for developing the rural economy as per the vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat but also involves the development of Aatma Nirbhar Villages.
- The provision makes sense as rural India is increasingly becoming a focus area of innovation and a source for start-ups and other small and medium-sized businesses.

4. National Start-up Day

- The Prime Minister has recently announced January 16 as the National Start-up Day and has asked the start-ups to approach the semi-urban and rural areas to launch new projects.
- He also lauded the growth of the start-up sector in India over the past few years saying “there’s at least one start-up in at least 625 districts across India.
- Nearly half of India’s all startups are in Tier-2 or Tier-3 cities.
- The government has plans in place to encourage start-ups in the agritech sector as well as those who make rural India their base by giving them tax exemptions and other monetary and policy benefits.

5. Kisan Drones and Vibrant Villages

- The Union budget emphasises on use of Kisan Drones for various purposes in the rural areas. They include crop assessments, land records, spraying of insecticides and micronutrients for the agriculture sector.
- The government is launching a ‘Drone Shakti’ initiative and will facilitate the use of drones as a service.
- The Union Civil Aviation Ministry had estimated that India’s drone sector’s turnover will reach Rs 12,000-15,000 crore by 2026 from Rs 8,000 lakh in 2021.
- Drones are becoming popular in the farming community for their limited costs, their extensive utility and their ease of use.

Conclusion

- Overall, the budgetary provisions for rural tech enablement and empowerment show a strong commitment to continue the good work already done to develop an ICT ecosystem across the country.
- The budget provisions reflect continuity in terms of the government's long-term vision but also draw attention to its out-of-box thinking in some aspects.

Animal Husbandry and Fisheries

GS Syllabus Covered

GS - II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS - III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Introduction

- Allied sectors of agriculture i.e animal husbandry, dairy farming, and fisheries play a pivotal role in the growth of the national economy.
- Dairy is the single largest agricultural commodity contributing five percent of the national economy.
- The sector employs more than eight crore farmers directly.
- Fisheries sector supports the livelihood of over 28 million people in India, especially the marginalised and vulnerable communities.
- It contributes about 1.24 percent to the country's GVA (Gross Value Added) and over 7.28 percent to the agricultural GVA.
- The Current Budget proposals reflect the commitment of the Government for the inclusive development of allied sectors and welfare of associated farmers.

Higher Allocations for Accelerating

- The Ministry of Finance has allocated Rs. 6,407.31 crore (2022-23) for the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- The Budget allocation has been increased by 44 percent over the last year.
- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), an umbrella scheme of the Department of Fisheries, received a big boost by 88 percent increase in budget.
- A significant increase in the allocation for the National Livestock Mission is likely to boost employment generation, entrepreneurship development, and productivity in the livestock sector.
- Fund allocation for Rashtriya Gokul Mission has also been increased to further accelerate the pace of development and conservation of indigenous bovine breeds.
- Cutting-edge techniques are being promoted under the mission to genetically upgrade bovine population for increasing productivity.
- Along with nationwide AI (Artificial Insemination) programme, modern facilities for embryo transfer, production of sex sorted semen and centres of excellence are also being established under the mission.

Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund

- Creation of infrastructure is a key requirement in the animal husbandry sector to make it more profitable for dairy farmers and entrepreneurs alike.
- Hence, Government of India launched a special Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund worth Rs. 15,000 crore in 2020.
- The Fund facilitates investments (3 percent interest subvention and credit guarantee up to 25 percent of total borrowing) for the establishment of dairy and meat processing plants and animal feed plants.
- In addition to individual entrepreneurs and private sector companies, FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations), MSMEs and Section 8 companies are also entitled to get benefits under the Fund.

Dairy for Livelihood Security

- Dairying and its allied activities have become a very important secondary source of income for millions of rural families.
- The National Programme for Dairy Development, which got a boost in the present budget, aims to strengthen and create the necessary infrastructure for the production of quality milk and milk products.

- It includes the end-to-end value chain from production and procurement to processing and marketing of milk products.
- In recent budget proposals, the reduction in Alternate Minimum Tax for cooperatives from 18.5 percent to 15 percent is a significant step that would provide a level playing field between cooperative societies and private sector companies.
- The Government has also announced the reduction in surcharge on cooperative societies from 12 percent to 7 percent for those having a total income of more than Rs. 1 crore up to Rs. 10 crores.

Fisheries for Rural Prosperity

- Currently, India is the second largest fish producing country in the world accounting for 7.56 percent of global production.
- Recognising the significance of the fisheries sector in national economy and rural prosperity, the government has made Budget proposals to unlock its full potential.
- Under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), key interventions are mainly undertaken along following verticals:
 - Enhancing fish production and productivity
 - Modernising and strengthening the value chain
 - Creating fisheries and post-harvest infrastructure
 - Developing robust fisheries management and regulatory frameworks

Remunerative for shrimp farming

- To promote highly remunerative shrimp farming, a network of brood banks will be set-up using indigenous technology to make quality seeds available to shrimp farmers in sufficient quantities. The Budget proposes to reduce duty on certain inputs required for shrimp aquaculture so as to promote its exports.
- Budget also proposes to waive 15 percent import duty on frozen krill, squid and mussels used as feed in shrimp hatcheries.
- The 5 percent duty on shrimp aquafeed used in farms has also been suspended.

Kisan Credit Card

- To address the credit needs of fish farmers, the facility of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) remains extended to fisheries to meet their working capital needs.
- Implementation of welfare activities such as fishermen's insurance, saving-cum-relief and vessel insurance with enhanced coverage will continue on priority basis.
- An effective and user-friendly institutional mechanism will be created for the delivery of digital and high-tech services to fishermen and fish farmers.

Conclusion

- The Government has escalated its efforts to harness the full potential of Allied sectors of agriculture i.e animal husbandry, dairy farming, and fisheries.
- Strengthening of current schemes and launch of new initiatives are likely to change fortunes of millions of farmers engaged in allied occupations as a secondary source of income.

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Inclusive Rural and Agricultural Prosperity

GS Syllabus Covered

- GS - II:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- GS - III:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Introduction

- The Union Budget 2022-23 has acknowledged the importance of the rural economy and agriculture sector in the economy.
- Agriculture is the backbone of India's rural economy, which provides livelihood to almost 70 percent of the rural population.
- During the pandemic, agriculture remained the saviour for the rural populations.
- The Government of India has introduced major reforms in the agriculture sector that are important for the prosperity of the nation and improving the standard of living of farmers.
- With the 'Beej Se Bazaar Tak' approach, the government has brought remarkable changes in the agriculture sector.

Emphasis on Agriculture potential

- This Budget has emphasised to unleash the true potential of Indian agriculture, that includes chemical-free natural farming, modernisation of agri-infrastructure, and technology-driven growth.
- The Kisan Drones Initiatives, delivery of digital and Hi-Tech services to farmers, and promoting post-harvest value chain will lead to long-term and sustainable growth of the agriculture sector. These initiatives will also make the Indian agri-market competitive and remunerative for farmers.

Budgetary allocations

- In this budget, the allocation to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is about Rs. 1.32 lakh crore out of which a major portion goes to 3 major schemes viz.
- PM KISAN (51 percent)
- Interest subvention on short-term credit to farmers (14.7 percent)
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (11.6 percent).
- These three schemes have benefited the farmers by augmenting working funds, mitigating risk, and providing cheap credit for agriculture.

Section 1- Fostering Inclusive Rural Prosperity

1.1 Promoting Village Development in Underdeveloped Regions

- The union government has announced a Vibrant Villages Programme and Aspirational Block Programme.
- Vibrant Village Programme, which will be implemented in villages on the northern border and will provide road connectivity, renewable energy, and support for livelihood generation.
- Under the Aspirational Districts Programme, 95 percent of 112 selected districts have made significant progress in key sectors such as health, nutrition, financial inclusion, and basic infrastructure.

1.2 Focus on Tangible Assets for Inclusive Growth

- The Budget has focused on the creation of tangible assets like roads and houses for spearheading the development in rural areas.
- Infrastructure bottlenecks have emerged as a major challenge in improving the socio-economic indicators and sustaining the economic growth in rural areas.
- The Budget has enhanced the allocation under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana from Rs. 14,000 crore in 2021-22 (RE) to Rs.18,000 crore in 2022-23 (BE).

1.3 Improving the Access to Basic Amenities

- The Budget includes the creation of Saksham Anganwadis which will be new generation anganwadis that have better infrastructure and audio-visual aids, powered by clean energy and providing improved environment for early child development.
- The government's plan to upgrade two lakh anganwadis.
- The Budget has announced the expansion of the 'One class-One TV channel' programme of PM eVIDYA from 12 to 200 TV channels.
- This will enable all states to provide supplementary education in regional languages for classes 1-12.
- The Budget has earmarked Rs. 60,000 crore for the Jal Jeevan Mission that aims to provide potable water to 3.8 crore households in 2022-23.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission was launched in August 2019 to provide safe drinking water to all rural households by 2024.

1.4 Taking a Giant Leap Forward to the Digital Bharat

- COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the digital divide that exists in the country and the highlighted need for digital connectivity especially in rural India.
- The Budget has announced the laying of optical fibre in all villages, including remote areas, will be completed by the year 2025.
- This will provide access to e-services, communication facilities, and digital resources in all villages at par with the urban areas.
- The budget has allocated 5 percent of annual collections under the Universal Service Obligation Fund to enable affordable broadband and mobile service proliferation in rural and remote areas.

Section 2 -Boosting Agriculture Sector

2.1 Enhanced Procurement to Ensure Remunerative Prices to Farmers

- Higher procurement of wheat and paddy has not just supported higher food distribution during the pandemic, but it has also provided the remunerative price for their produce to the beneficiary farmers.
- The last two years have also witnessed record food grain production in the country. Higher production and enhanced procurement have protected farmers from the trap of cobwebs.

2.2 Moving Towards Chemical-free Farming

- This Budget has proposed the promotion of 'Chemical-free Natural Farming' throughout the country.
- In the first stage, focus will be on farmers' lands in a 5-km wide corridor along the river Ganga. This will help in soil restoration and improve soil fertility.
- Growing awareness about healthy food and rising income of the people are creating the demand for chemical-free/ organic food.

2.3 Promoting Post-Harvest Value Addition and Branding of Millet Products

- The Budget has announced the support for the millets products to boost the production and help in increasing India's agri-export.
- Focus upon food processing and post-harvest value addition will help in reduction of food wastage.
- As per the budget document, oilseeds production will increase from 36.10 million tonnes in 2020-21 to 54.10 million tonnes by 2025-26.
- Branding of millets and boosting production of oilseed through rationalised comprehensive schemes will also promote the production of millets and oilseeds in dryland/semi-arid regions as around 51 percent of the country's net sown area comes under the rainfed area.

2.4 Leveraging Modern Technology to Agriculture Sector

- Technology plays a vital role in all aspects of life.
- Announcement of the 'Kisan Drones' for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients can help in mechanising the agriculture sector and aid the farmers significantly.
- The budget announcement will facilitate the drone industry to engage with the farming community to improve operational efficiency and maximise profitability.
- This will make India's agricultural sector future-ready.

- Encouragement being given to States for IT-based Land Records Management to adopt Unique Land Parcel Identification Number will facilitate more credit flow to the owners of such land.

2.5 Boosting Capex in Agriculture Sector

- This budget has focused on the increase in capital expenditure in the Indian economy.
- The government has recognised farm produce value chain as an area for capital infusion and raised the co-investment model, which will be facilitated through NABARD.
- This will complement the target of formation of 10,000 FPOs in the country announced in budget 2021- 22.
- FPOs have been doing a commendable job at reducing the input costs and facilitating the increase in the price farmers receive for their produce.

2.6 Promotion of R&D in Agriculture

- The government has recognised the necessity of research and development in agriculture.
- As per the budget announcement, states will be encouraged to revise the syllabi of agricultural universities to meet the needs of natural, zero-budget organic farming, modern-day agriculture, value addition and management.
- Introducing the promotion of new-age technologies in agriculture, encouraging data-driven solutions for smart farming and market connect, strengthening of FPOs, and enabling investment in research and development will provide necessary propulsion to agricultural growth.

Conclusion

- Union Budget 2022-23 has laid thrust on four priorities: **advancement and modernisation of infrastructure, inclusive development welfare, boosting capital expenditure, and enabling growth through productivity enhancement.**
- Focus on infrastructure development will connect rural areas to the major economic centres which will generate employment opportunities for rural youth.
- The Budget 2022-23 has a long-term vision for progressive, developed, prosperous, and technologically driven India@100.

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