Incidence of Alzheimer's after the pandemic The All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) estimates a 15 per cent increase in the number of people getting Alzheimer's, adding that such studies are not available from India. The Coronavirus pandemic has unmasked several neurodegenerative diseases and Alzheimer's is one of them. Post-Corona, a number of people have also been facing memory impairment. How to keep Alzheimer's at bay?

Just like physical exercise, exercising the brain every day is also important. "Learning new languages, developing hobbies like music, and solving puzzles like Sudoku keep the brain active and cognitively fit. It is

keep the brain active and cognitively fit. It is also important for the elderly to go out, make new friends and socialise.

The disease can also be kept at bay by mitigating risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity through a good diet, exercise, enough sleep, and doing away with smoking.

Context

With the elderly facing severe social isolation during the pandemic, not reaching the clinics early on for the fear of contracting the infection, and the inflammatory changes caused by the Covid-19 infection itself, there has been an increase in the number of people getting diagnosed with Alzheimer's – a progressive neurodegenerative disease that causes the brain cells to shrink and die.

What is Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that affects memory, thinking and behaviour. Symptoms eventually grow severe enough to interfere with daily tasks.

ALZHEIMER

Why is the burden of Alzheimer's increasing?

The increasing lifespan and very high burden of diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity are expected to "dramatically" increase the prevalence of dementia in India.

Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of disorders that lead to impaired memory, decision-making and social skills – Alzheimer's is one of the most common types of dementia.

The disease usually occurs in people over the age of 65 years with a very small proportion getting early-onset.

The Dementia in India report 2020 estimates that there are 5.3 million people over the age of 60 years living with dementia, with the prevalence projected to increase to 14 million by 2050.

NATIONAL HEALTH ACCOUNTS ESTIMATES 2018-19

Context

According to the National Health Accounts Estimates 2018-19, government spending as a percentage of total health expenditure increased by more than 11 percentage points over the previous five years, from 23.2% in 2013-14 to 34.5% in 2018 19.

The National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates describe the country's total expenditure on healthcare — whether by the government, the private sector, individuals, or NGOs — and the flow of these funds. It answers questions such as what are the sources of healthcare spending, who manages this spending, who provides healthcare services, and which services are utilised.

Major findings of the report

One of the most important findings of the 2018-19 report is that government spending as a proportion of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) went down to 1.28% from 1.35% in the previous year's (2017-18) report.

The total health spending — which includes spending by both government and non-government agents — declined from 3.9% of the GDP to 3.2% in the five years up to 2018-19.

More importantly though, the 2018-19 report shows that the massive fall in out-of-pocket expenditure by patients at the point of care recorded in the previous report has been sustained.

Out-of-pocket expenditure

People paying for healthcare expenses out-of-pocket made up for 48.2% of the total health expenses in the year 2018-19, down from 48.8% in the previous year (2017-18). The out-of-pocket expense has decreased substantially from the 62.6% recorded in 2014-15.

In 2017, India was in 66th position out of 189 countries, with \$100.05 per capita out-of-pocket spending, according to data from the Global Health Expenditure Database (annexure in the report).

Out-of-pocket expenditure was the highest in the developed countries, with the United States ranking 185 (\$1151.94), and the United Kingdom at 167 (\$755.72). At the top — No. 189 — was Switzerland, with \$2,109.74.

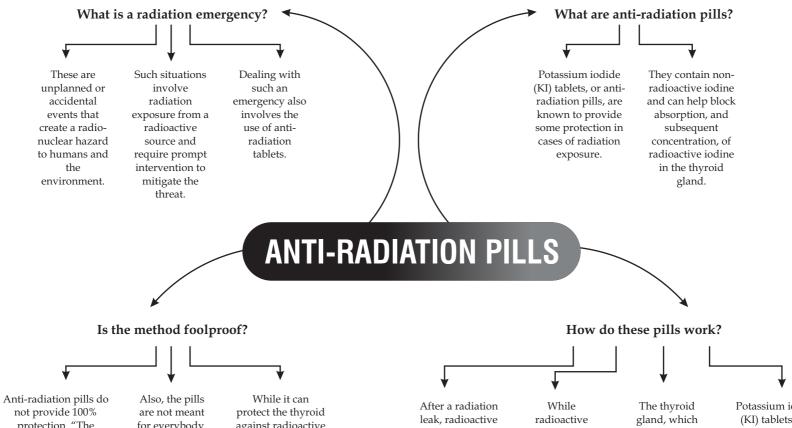
Out-of-pocket expenditure

The current health expenditure — not accounting for any expenses that can be utilised over a few years — stood at Rs 5.4 lakh crore, which was 90.6% of the total health expenditure.

The Centre's share in the current health expenditure stood at 11.71%, state governments accounted for 19.63%, local bodies 1.01%, and households (including insurance contributions) 60.11% of the current health expenditure. The rest was accounted for by corporates (as insurance contributions), NGOs, and external or donor funding.

The total government health expenditure, which is spending by any government body for any purpose, for the year stood at Rs 2.42 lakh crore and accounted for 40.6% of the total spending on healthcare.

The government's share in the total expenditure has increased by over 11 percentage points in five years, from 29% recorded in 2014-15.



not provide 100% protection. "The effectiveness of KI also depends on how much radioactive iodine gets into the body and how quickly it is absorbed in the body.

Also, the pills are not meant for everybody. They are recommended for people under 40 years of age. Pregnant and breastfeeding women are also advised to take them.

While it can protect the thyroid against radioactive iodine, it cannot protect other organs against radiation contamination.

After a radiation leak, radioactive iodine floats through the air and then contaminates food, water and soil.

while radioactive iodine deposited during external exposure can be removed using warm water and soap, according to the World Health
Organisation, the bigger risk is inhaling it.

The thyroid gland, which uses iodine to produce hormones to regulate the body's metabolism, has no way of telling radioactive from non-radioactive iodine.

Potassium iodide (KI) tablets rely on this to achieve 'thyroid blocking'. KI pills took a few hours before or soon after radiation exposure to ensure that nonradioactive iodine in the medicine is absorbed quickly to make the thyroid "full".

The precipitation of 2022's monsoon has been poor in UP and Jharkhand. Uttar Pradesh received 44 per cent less rain than normal as of August 16.

Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal's situations also look grim, with an average of around 30 per cent less rainfall than usual.

The latest government data shows that the

The latest government data shows that the sowing area of rice has declined in India by 12 per cent compared to 2021. Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh account for most of the reduction.

India's drought-prone area has increased by 57 per cent since 1997. Drought has affected nearly two-thirds of the country from 2020 to 2022.

Over the last decade, one-third of India's districts have experienced more than four droughts, and drought affects 50 million people each year.

According to the UN. The report, global drought could impact more than 75 per cent of the world population by 2050 and around 4.8-5.7 billion living in water-scarce areas for at least one month each year.

In addition, the UNCCD's second Global Land Outlook, released recently, estimates about 16 million square kilometres of land (the size of South America) will be degraded if current trends continue.

The combined occurrence of extreme droughts and flash floods across the globe is a grave sign, pointing towards a greater need to focus on better climate policy.

For without significant global efforts to counter climate change, such extreme weather conditions will only increase in frequency and magnitude.

 Drought is a prolonged dry period in the natural climate cycle that can occur anywhere in the world.

It is a slow-onset disaster characterized by the lack of precipitation, resulting in a water shortage.

Drought can have a serious impact on health, agriculture, economies, energy and the environment.

Meteorological drought is defined usually based on the degree of dryness (in comparison to some "normal" or average amount) and the duration of the dry period. Definitions of meteorological drought must be considered region-specific since the atmospheric conditions that result in deficiencies of precipitation are highly variable from region to region.

Agricultural drought links various characteristics of meteorological (or hydrological) drought to agricultural impacts, focusing on precipitation shortages, differences between actual and potential evapotranspiration, soil water deficits, reduced groundwater or reservoir levels, and so forth.

Hydrological drought is associated with the effects of periods of precipitation (including snowfall) and shortfalls on surface or subsurface water supply (i.e., streamflow, reservoir and lake levels, groundwater). The frequency and severity of hydrological drought are often defined on a watershed or river basin scale.

Socioeconomic definitions of drought associate the supply and demand of some economic good with elements of meteorological, hydrological, and agricultural drought. It differs from the aforementioned types of drought because its occurrence depends on the time and space processes of supply and demand to identify or classify droughts.

Ecological drought, is defined as "a prolonged and widespread deficit in naturally available water supplies — including changes in natural and managed hydrology — that create multiple stresses across ecosystems."

DROUGHT

Drought

in India

Way

ahead

Types of droughts

What is

drought?

As many blended food and cosmetic products are sold on the market, the key constituents need to be mentioned on the product packaging. It is common for consumers to assume that brands' claims are accurate, but such claims are usually misleading.

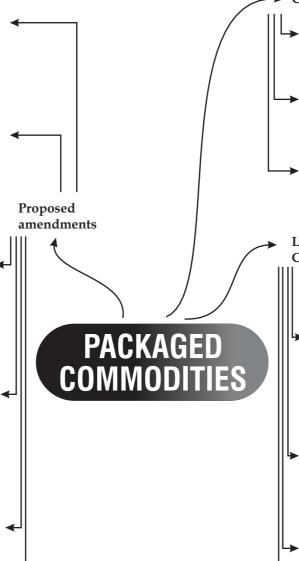
Additionally, the front side of the package must contain the percentage of the composition of the unique selling proposition (USP). As the name suggests, a USP also known as a unique selling point, is a marketing strategy designed to inform customers about the superiority of one's own brand or product.

The Department of Consumer Affairs, Legal Metrology Division has suggested that at least two prime components should be declared on the package's front side along with the brand name. Currently, manufacturers list the ingredients and nutritional information only on the back of the packaging.

The proposed Section 6(1)(ba) states that when a commodity contains more than one constituent, the front side of the package must include a declaration of two or more of the commodities' prime constituents along with the brand name. This declaration must also include the percentage/quantity of the USPs of the product in the same font size as the declaration of the USPs. However, mechanical or electrical commodities are excluded from this sub-rule.

Moreover, public comments were solicited from all stakeholders, including industries, associations, consumers, and voluntary consumer organisations, in order to obtain their viewpoints.

When the new provision of Section 6(1) (ba) is added, consumers will not be misled by the fake claims of manufacturers relating to the content in blended foods and cosmetics.



Context

The Department of Consumer Affairs, Legal Metrology Division has notified a draft amendment to the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011.

The Department of Consumer Affairs has suggested that at least two prime components should be declared on the package's front side along with the brand name. Currently, manufacturers list the ingredients and nutritional information on the back of the packaging.

Public comments were solicited from all stakeholders, including industries, associations, consumers, and voluntary consumer organisations.

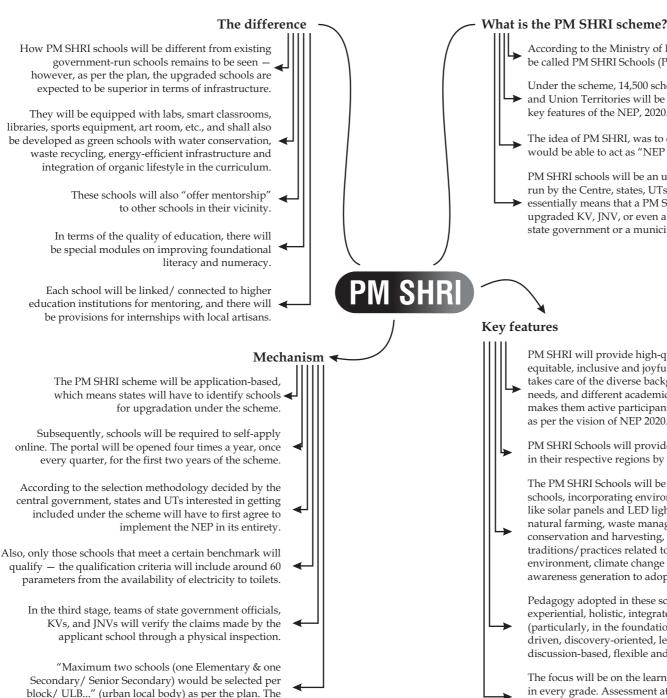
Legal Metrology (packaged Commodities) Rules 2011

It is mandatory under the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 to ensure several declarations, such as the name and address of the manufacturer/packer/importer, the country of origin, the common or generic name of the commodity, the net quantity, the month and year of manufacture, the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) and consumer care information. As a consumer-oriented policy, all prepackaged commodities should also be inspected.

As stated in Rule 2(h), the "principal display panel", about a package, means the total surface area of a package containing the information required by these rules, namely that all the information should be grouped and given in one place — the pre-printed information could be grouped and given in one place and the online information in another place.

Additionally, Rule 9(1)(a) provides that the declaration on the package must be legible and prominent. The consumers' 'right to be informed' is violated when important declarations are not prominently displayed on the package.

If there is more than one major product, Rule 6(1)(b) states that ".....the name or number of each product shall be mentioned on the package." This sub-rule is, however, not applicable to mechanical or electrical commodities.



final call will be taken by an expert committee.

According to the Ministry of Education, the scheme will be called PM SHRI Schools (PM Schools for Rising India).

Under the scheme, 14,500 schools across India's states and Union Territories will be redeveloped to reflect the key features of the NEP, 2020.

The idea of PM SHRI, was to create a set of schools that would be able to act as "NEP labs".

PM SHRI schools will be an upgrade of existing schools run by the Centre, states, UTs, and local bodies. This essentially means that a PM SHRI school can be an upgraded KV, JNV, or even a school that is run by a state government or a municipal corporation.

Key features

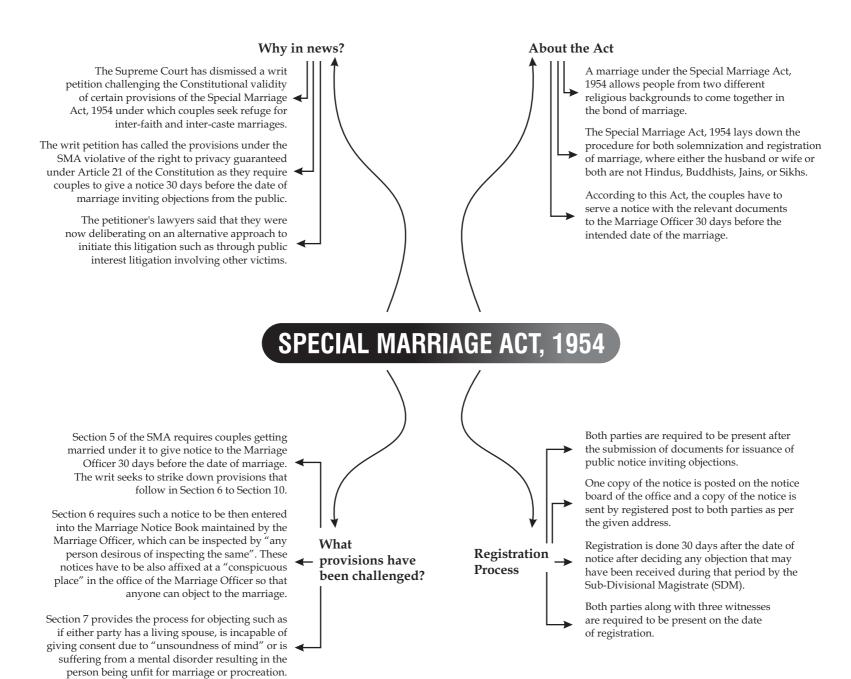
PM SHRI will provide high-quality education in an equitable, inclusive and joyful school environment that takes care of the diverse background, multilingual needs, and different academic abilities of children and makes them active participants in their learning process as per the vision of NEP 2020.

PM SHRI Schools will provide leadership to other schools in their respective regions by providing mentorship.

The PM SHRI Schools will be developed as Green schools, incorporating environmentally friendly aspects like solar panels and LED lights, nutrition gardens with natural farming, waste management, plastic-free, water conservation and harvesting, the study of traditions/practices related to the protection of the environment, climate change related hackathon and awareness generation to adopt a sustainable lifestyle.

Pedagogy adopted in these schools will be more experiential, holistic, integrated, play/toy-based (particularly, in the foundational years) inquirydriven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible and enjoyable.

The focus will be on the learning outcomes of every child in every grade. Assessment at all levels will be based on conceptual understanding and application of knowledge to real-life situations and will be competency-based.



How are the world's oceans regulated as of now?

Some treaties, along with the UNCLOS, regulate the conduct of actors on the high seas.

The UNCLOS led to the establishment of territorial sea boundaries 22 km offshore, deciding the region up to which countries could claim full sovereign territorial rights, as well as the 200 nautical miles EEZ limit. It also created the International Seabed Authority and other conflict-resolution mechanisms.

But a treaty dedicated to protecting ocean health does not exist as of now. Conversely, every country has the right to access open seas, resulting in large-scale drilling and trawling operations for catching fish and other animals for commercial purposes.

Why in news?

Negotiations involving 168 countries, including the European Union, to agree on a UN treaty for protecting oceans failed on August 27.

When the latest round of talks began two weeks ago in New York, it was hoped that an agreement would be arrived at for the conserving marine life at the 'high seas' which lie outside the exclusive jurisdiction of different countries.

UN HIGH SEAS TREATY

What are the risks of countries failing to reach an agreement?

But a treaty dedicated to protecting ocean health does not exist as of now. Conversely, every country has the right to access open seas, resulting in large-scale drilling and trawling operations for catching fish and other animals for commercial purposes.

According to NASA, ninety per cent of global warming is occurring in the ocean.

The effects of ocean warming include sea level rise due to thermal expansion, coral bleaching, accelerated melting of Earth's major ice sheets, intensified hurricanes, and changes in ocean health and biochemistry

According to World Wide Fund, excessive fishing has increased manifold over the years, and a third of species such as sharks and rays are at the risk of extinction

What is the proposed UN High Seas treaty?

Also referred to as the 'Paris Agreement for the Ocean', the treaty to deal with Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction has been under discussion for several years.

The proposed treaty concerns the ocean existing beyond the Exclusive Economic Zones that lie from the coast of a country to about 200 nautical miles or 370 km into the sea, till where it has special rights for exploration. Waters beyond that are known as open seas or high seas.

The treaty was to be negotiated under the United Nations Convention on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 which governs the rights of countries regarding marine resources.

As there is no treaty for conserving the health of vast swathes of the earth's oceans, a UN resolution in 2017 decided to rectify this while setting 2022 as the deadline.