

Insights Daily Current Affairs + PIB: 26 February 2019

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Relevant articles from PIB:

Paper 2:

| Topics covered:

1. Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance, applications, models, success, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 awards

What to study?

For Prelims: About National Youth Parliament festival, awards and NYD-its significance, about NSS and NYKS.

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi to confer the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 Awards to the Winners.

Background:

National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 was celebrated on 12th January, 2019, on the occasion of National Youth Day.

National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 Theme: “Be The Voice of New India” and “Find solutions and contribute to policy”.

Eligibility: Youth in the age bracket of 18-25 years are invited to participate in the District Youth Parliaments.

Significance: The National Youth Parliament Festival will encourage the youth to engage with public issues, understand the common man's point of view, form their opinion and express these in an articulate manner. Relevant and effective voices on the vision of New India would be captured and documented to make these available to policy makers and implementers to take it forward.

National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 has been jointly organised by National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) under the aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

National Youth Day:

The National Youth Day (also called as Yuva Diwas) is observed on January 12 every year to commemorate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.

- The main objective is to propagate the philosophy and the ideals of Swami Vivekananda.
- It became a mainstream celebration in India from 1985 onwards and observed on January 12 ever since.

About National Service Scheme (NSS):

- The National Service Scheme is an Indian government-sponsored public service program conducted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of India.
- The scheme was launched in Gandhiji's Centenary year in 1969.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan recommended introduction of national service in the academic institutions on a voluntary basis with a view to developing healthy contacts between the students and teachers on the one hand and establishing a constructive linkage between the campus and the community on the other hand.

About Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan:

- Nehru Yuva Kendras was established in 1972.
- Later in 1987 under Rajiv Gandhi Government it became Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, an autonomous organization under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

Paper 2:

| Topics Covered:

1. Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Skill Saathi Youth Conclave

What to study?

- ***For Prelims: Skill Saathi Youth initiative- Key features, implementation and significance.***
- ***For Mains: Need for skilling, challenges and various initiatives in this regard.***

Context: Nua Odisha, Dharmapada Samvaad-Skill Saathi Youth Conclave was recently held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

The Skill Saathi initiative has so far mobilised and counselled over 1 lakh candidate in Odisha and over 10 lakh youth across the country in the past three months.

About Skill Saathi Scheme:

The Skills Career Counselling Scheme aims to counsel 1 crore candidates from the age group of 15- 35 years focusing on School & College drop-outs, young adults from the community, college students, polytechnic students, ITI students, Diploma students, Graduates, Post-Graduates, NEET category (Not in Employment education or Training), etc. pan India from August 2018.

Counselling will be conducted on a standardized module/content as defined by NSDC/MSDE.

Objectives of the Skill Saathi Scheme:

- Create Awareness about the Skill India Mission and inform the youth of India about vocational education and its opportunities.
- Sensitize prospective candidates about available Market Opportunities under the Skill India Mission.
- Facilitate Psychometric Testing and Face-To-Face Counselling Interventions to create an individual-level impact to guide aspirants to make the right choice of training and subsequent employment/entrepreneurship.
- Facilitate Understanding of the concepts of New India, the prospects of India becoming the Skill Capital of the World and how the new generation of youth can become drivers of change.

Paper 2:

| Topics Covered:

1. 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.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban

What to study?

- **For Prelims: PMAY- Urban- key features.**
- **For Mains: Significance of the scheme, challenges ahead and measures needed to achieve the target.**

Context: The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved the construction of another 5,60,695 more affordable houses for the benefit of urban poor under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

Challenges ahead:

The scheme faces headwinds such as unavailability of land in prime areas, low participation of private developers on account of brand dilution, bidding mechanism, stringent cost and time schedules resulting in low yields, increasing construction costs due to absence of bulk sourcing of materials, and lack of new technology that impacts productivity, cost efficiency and quality.

Significance of the scheme:

- PMAY-U does offer a huge opportunity for several sectors by setting off a virtuous cycle.
- One crore houses would mean an opportunity for over Rs 2 lakh crore of home loans, and incremental consumption of 80-100 million tonne of cement and 10-15 million tonne of steel.
- The construction opportunity is of about four billion square feet over the life of PMAY-U. And all that would translate into 9-10 crore incremental jobs over the execution period.

About PMAY- Urban:

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Programme launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA), in Mission mode envisions provision of ***Housing for All by 2022, when the Nation completes 75 years of its Independence.***

The Mission seeks to address the housing requirement of urban poor including slum dwellers through following programme verticals:

1. Slum rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers with participation of private developers using land as a resource.
2. Promotion of Affordable Housing for weaker section through credit linked subsidy.
3. Affordable Housing in Partnership with Public & Private sectors.
4. Subsidy for beneficiary-led individual house construction /enhancement.

Key facts:

1. The beneficiaries are poor and people living under EWS and LIG categories in the country.
2. The scheme is divided into three phases. In the first phase, a total of 100 cities will be covered from April 2015 to March 2017. In phase two, 200 cities will be covered from April 2017 to March 2019. In the third phase, the leftover cities will be covered from April 2019 to

March 2022.

3. The government is providing an interest subsidy of 6.5% on housing loans which can be availed by beneficiaries for 15 years from start of loan date.
4. The government will grant Rs 1 lakh to all the beneficiaries of the scheme. In addition, Rs 1.5 lakh will be given to all eligible urban poor who want to construct their houses in urban areas or plan to go for renovation in their existing houses. One can also avail loans under this scheme to build toilets in existing houses.

Paper 2:

| Topics Covered:

1. Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.

Global Digital Health Partnership

What to study?

For Prelims and Mains: GDHP- composition, roles, objectives and significance.

Context: India is hosting 4th Summit of Global Digital Health Partnership.

About GDHP:

Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP) is ***an international collaboration of governments, government agencies and multinational organisations dedicated to improving the health and well-being of their citizens through the best use of evidence-based digital technologies.***

- Established in February 2018, the GDHP provides ***an opportunity for transformational engagement between its participants***, who are striving to learn and share best practice and policy that can support their digital health systems.
- It has been created to provide an international platform to facilitate global collaboration and cooperation to share policy insights, best practices and evidence based implementation of safe, secure digital technologies to improve the quality, accessibility and sustainability of health systems.

GDHP Member Countries:

Currently, 23 countries are the member of this group which include Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Estonia, Hong Kong SAR, India, Japan Republic of Indonesia, Italy, New Zealand, Netherlands Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the United States, Ukraine, Uruguay and the World Health Organization.

Five work streams of GDHP:

1. Cyber Security.
2. Evidence and Evaluation.
3. Policy Environments.
4. Interoperability
5. Clinical and Consumer Engagement.

Why is the GDHP important for populations globally?

As countries around the world face the challenges of designing systems and delivering services that result in good health and well-being for their citizens, digital technologies can provide potential solutions. They can improve the safety, quality and effectiveness of healthcare, support earlier diagnosis of disease and the development of new medicines and treatments. They can empower patients, citizens and the care professionals who serve them.

Governments are making significant investments to harness the power of technology and foster innovation and public-private partnerships that support high quality, sustainable health and care for all. The GDHP facilitates global collaboration and co-operation in the implementation of digital health services. There is currently no similar international forum to share best practice and enable co-working in digital health.

Paper 3:

| Topics Covered:

1. IP related issues.

'IPrism'

What to study?

- ***For Prelims: CIPAM and the new IPR policy.***
- ***For Mains: IPR Policy related issues.***

Context: The Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, in collaboration with ASSOCHAM and ERICSSON India, has launched the second edition of ***'IPrism', an Intellectual Property (IP) competition for students of schools, polytechnic institutes, colleges and universities.***

Aiming to foster a culture of innovation and creativity in the younger generation, the competition will ***provide young creators an opportunity to see their creations recognized on a national platform.***

About CIPAM:

Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) has been created as a professional body under the aegis of DIPP to take forward the implementation of the National IPR Policy that was approved by the Government in May 2016, with the slogan – “Creative India; Innovative India”.

Functions: CIPAM is working towards creating public awareness about IPRs in the country, promoting the filing of IPRs through facilitation, providing inventors with a platform to commercialize their IP assets and coordinating the implementation of the National IPR Policy in collaboration with Government Ministries/Departments and other stakeholders.

Relevant articles from various News Papers:

Paper 3:

| Topics Covered:

1. Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Prepaid payment instruments

What to study?

- ***For Prelims: What are PPIs and how are they regulated?***
- ***For Mains: Significance and role of PPIs, regulatory challenges faced by them.***

Context: In a much needed respite to e-wallet companies, the Reserve Bank of India has extended deadline for completion of Know Your Customer (KYC) norms for prepaid payment instrument (PPI) issuers by six months.

Background:

As per RBI directions, PPI issuers were required to complete the KYC process by February 28, 2019. PPIs or mobile wallets were mandated by the banking regulator in October 2017 to capture all information required under the know-your-customer (KYC) guidelines by end February.

What are PPIs?

Prepaid payment instruments are those which ***facilitate purchase of goods and services against the value stored on such instruments.*** Value stored on them is paid by the holder using a medium (cash, debit card, credit card etc).

- These are generally issued in the form of smart cards, mobile wallets, paper vouchers, internet accounts/wallets.
- Prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) come with a pre-loaded value and in some cases a pre-defined purpose of payment. They facilitate the purchase of goods and services as well as inter-personal remittance transactions such as sending money to a friend or a family member.
- ***These payment instruments are licensed and regulated by the Reserve Bank of India.*** There are three types of PPIs—closed system PPIs, semi-closed system PPIs and open system PPIs.
- The most common example of a closed system PPI is a brand-specific gift card. Such cards, physical or otherwise, can be used only at specific locations, and cannot be used to transfer funds from one account to another.

Sources: the hindu.

Paper 2:

| Topics Covered:

1. Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

The dispute between Britain and Mauritius over Chagos islands

What to study?

For Prelims and Mains: About ICJ, implications of its advisory opinion, Chagos islands and about the dispute.

Context: The UK should end its control of the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean "as rapidly as possible", the UN's highest court has said. The International Court of Justice said the islands were not lawfully separated from the former colony of Mauritius.

The UK Foreign Office said: ***"This is an advisory opinion, not a judgment."***



What's the issue?

Britain detached the Chagos Islands from Mauritius in 1965, three years before Mauritian independence. From 1967 to 1973, some 1,500 Chagos islanders were gradually forced to leave their homes so that the largest island, Diego Garcia, could be leased to the US for a strategic airbase.

Today, Diego Garcia hosts a major US military base.

In 2016, after several judicial challenges, Britain extended Diego Garcia's lease until 2036 and declared that the expelled islanders would not be allowed to go back. In 2017, Mauritius successfully petitioned the United Nations to seek an ICJ advisory opinion on the legality of the separation.

Mauritius claims it was forced to give up the islands – now a British overseas territory – in 1965 in exchange for independence, which it gained in 1968.

Arguments by Mauritius:

Mauritius argues it was illegal for Britain to break up its territory. It claims sovereignty over the archipelago and demands the right to resettle former residents.

The crux of the Mauritian claim is ***the right of self-determination***. In its submission to the court, the Mauritian government claimed that the separation of the islands from Mauritius was in clear breach of ***UN resolution 1514***, also known as the ***Colonial Declaration***. Passed in 1960, ***it enshrined the right of self-determination for colonial peoples and specifically banned the breakup of colonies prior to independence***. This was intended to keep borders stable, and to prevent colonial powers from simply absorbing colonial territory into their overseas territory so as to retain their sovereignty.

Yet in spite of this resolution, a number of states (including France and the UK) kept possession of parts of their former colonies following the decolonisation process.

Implications of this judgment:

While ICJ advisory opinions are not binding, the ramifications of the opinion will be highly significant; an opinion in favour of Mauritius may strengthen their position in any future negotiations, as well as putting significant international pressure on the UK over the status of the territory.

But what could be particularly critical is the decision's impact on far broader issues of post-colonial sovereignty, and the legitimacy of colonial era independence arrangements.

Sources: the hindu.

Paper 3:

| Topics Covered:

1. 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.

Nine new items added to MSP for minor forest produce scheme

What to study?

- ***For Prelims: MSP for MFP scheme, items covered.***
- ***For Mains: Significance of the scheme, MFP and its significance for tribes.***

Context: The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has added nine minor forest produce (MFP) items to its minimum support price (MSP) for MFP scheme. The total number of MFPs covered under the list is 49.

The nine new items are: Bakul (dried bark), Kutaj (dried bark), Noni/Aal (dried fruits), Sonapatha/Syonak pods, Chanothi seeds, Kalihari (dried tubers), Makoi (dried fruits), Apang plant and Sugandhrnantri roots/tubers.

About MSP for MFP scheme:

The MSP for MFP scheme was started by the Centre in 2013 to ensure fair and remunerative prices to MFP gatherers. The total outlay for the scheme is Rs 967 crore as Centre's share for the planned period (2013-14 to 2016-17).

- ***The scheme is designed as a social safety net for improvement of livelihood of MFP gatherers*** by providing them fair price for the MFPs

they collect.

- ***The scheme has been started with the objective of providing fair price to MFP gatherers***, enhance their income level and ensure sustainable harvesting of MFPs. The MSP scheme seeks assurance of buying at a particular price, primary processing, storage, transportation etc while ensuring sustainability of the resource base.

Implementation of the scheme:

Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India is the Nodal Ministry for implementation of the scheme which will announce Minimum Support Price (MSP) for the selected MFPs with the technical support from TRIFED.

- ***TRIFED will act as the Central Nodal Agency for implementation and monitoring of the scheme through State level implementing agencies.***
- State designated agencies will undertake procurement of notified MFPs directly from MFP gatherers (individual or collectives) at haats notified procurement centers at grass root level at prefixed Minimum Support Price and ensure full & timely on the spot payment to MFP gatherers.

Significance of MFP:

1. Minor Forest Produce (MFP) is a major source of livelihood for tribals who belong to the poorest of the poor section of society. The importance of MFPs for this section of the society can be gauged from the fact that majority of 100 million tribals depend on MFPs for food, fodder, shelter, medicines and cash income.
2. It provides them critical subsistence during the lean seasons, particularly for primitive tribal groups such as hunter gatherers, and the landless. Tribals derive 20-40% of their annual income from MFP on which they spend major portion of their time.
3. This activity has strong linkage to women's financial empowerment as most of the MFPs are collected and used / sold by women. MFP sector has the potential to create about 10 million workdays jobs annually in the country.

Sources: down to earth.

Paper 3:

| Topics Covered:

1. Awareness in space.

NASA New Horizons

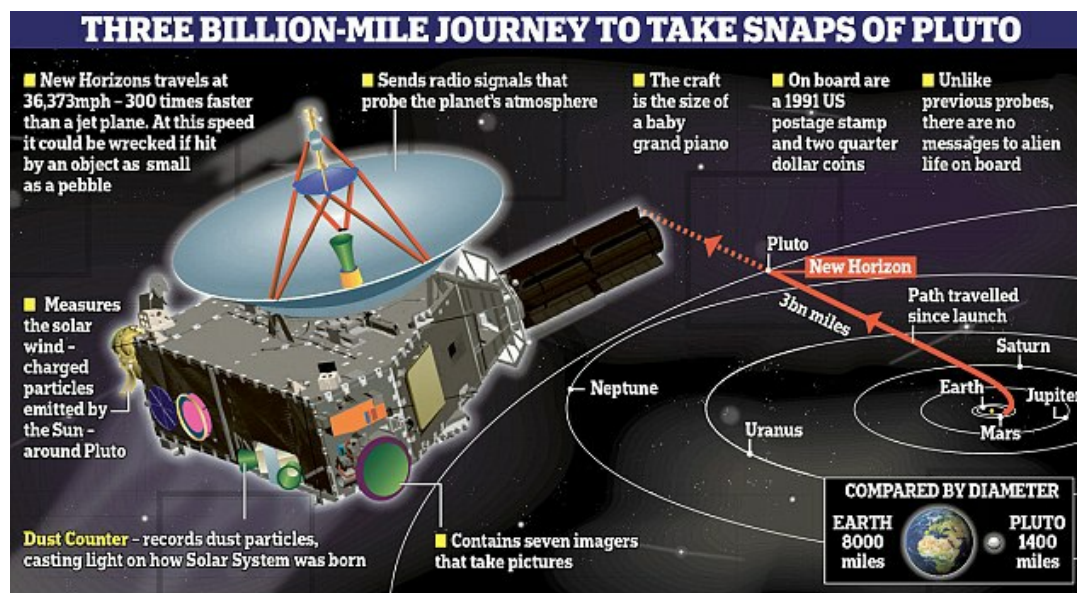
What to study?

For Prelims and Mains: Ultima Thule and New Horizons- Key facts.

Context: NASA has captured the sharpest-ever image of Ultima Thule. The new image shows circular pieces of terrain, deep pits and other details that were previously elusive.

Key facts- Ultima Thule:

- Ultima Thule is located in the Kuiper belt in the outermost regions of the Solar System, beyond the orbit of Neptune.
- It measures approximately 30 km in diameter, and is irregularly shaped.
- Ultima Thule has a reddish color, probably caused by exposure of hydrocarbons to sunlight over billions of years.
- Ultima Thule belongs to a class of Kuiper belt objects called the “cold classicals”, which have nearly circular orbits with low inclinations to the solar plane.



Background:

New Horizons was launched on 19 January 2006, and has been travelling through space for the past nine years. New Horizon's core science mission is to map the surfaces of Pluto and Charon, to study Pluto's atmosphere and to take temperature readings.

Sources: the hindu.

Paper 3:

| Topics Covered:

1. Awareness in space.

Wide Field InfraRed Survey Telescope

What to study?

For Prelims and Mains: WFIRST- objectives, significance and operation, what is gravitational microlensing?

Context: WFIRST telescope will give humans the largest, deepest, clearest picture of the universe since the Hubble Space Telescope could find as many as 1,400 new planets outside Earth's solar system. The new telescope paves the way for a more accurate, more focused search for extraterrestrial life, with about 100 of the not-yet-discovered planets having the same or lower mass as Earth.

About WFIRST:

WFIRST, the Wide Field InfraRed Survey Telescope, is a NASA observatory designed to settle essential questions in the areas of dark energy, exoplanets, and infrared astrophysics.

WFIRST will have two instruments, the Wide Field Instrument, and the Coronagraph Instrument.

The Wide Field Instrument will have a field of view that is 100 times greater than the Hubble infrared instrument, capturing more of the sky with less observing time. As the primary instrument, the Wide Field Instrument will measure light from a billion galaxies over the course of the mission lifetime.

WFIRST will use gravitational microlensing in its search for new planets.

Gravitational microlensing is a technique that relies on the gravity of stars and planets to bend and magnify the light coming from stars that pass behind them from the telescope's viewpoint.

Why WFIRST?

With the 2.4 meter telescope, single WFIRST images will uncover millions of galaxies. For example, where Hubble has found only a few galaxies within 500 million years of the Big Bang, WFIRST will find hundreds of these rare objects. In addition, the WFIRST coronagraph instrument will directly image ice and gas giant exoplanets.

Sources: toi.