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Category: POLITY

1. [Nutrient packets may replace food: Maneka Gandhi](#)

In news:

- Women and Child Development ministry is planning to revamp of its supplementary nutrition programme.
- **Direct to beneficiaries:** States should provide nutrient packages directly to beneficiaries instead of providing food through anganwadis.
- **Present scenario:** the supplementary nutrition is in the form of take-home rations or hot-cooked meals

New Policy:

- Under the new policy, instead of food, the focus would be on nutrient packets that will provide 1,000 calories to pregnant and lactating mothers and 600 calories to children
- The packets(mentioned above) would have a dry mixture of peanuts, millets and micro-nutrients which can be consumed with milk, lassi, juice, or water

Ministry's suggestion:

- Nutrient packages should be delivered through post offices
- Thirty packages can be delivered through the post office to every family that has a baby and a pregnant mother. Since it is not vegetable or rice, it cannot be misused or sold in the market

2. [Rijiju now says Chakmas can't be given citizenship](#)

In news:

- **Supreme Court order, 2015:** directed the center to grant citizenship to the Chakma-Hajongs, Buddhists and Hindus from undivided Pakistan.
- **Union government:** decided to honor the Supreme Court's decision.
- **Union Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju response:**

1. The Supreme Court order was not implementable.
2. The two persecuted communities who came from Chittagong (now Bangladesh, then undivided Pakistan) were settled in Arunachal Pradesh between 1964-69 and any citizenship to them will disturb the "demography" of the tribal State.

3. [Reimagining the OBC quota](#)

Context:

- Sub-categorization of the Other Backward Classes (OBC)

Creation of committee

- Recently, the government has announced the creation of a committee to look into sub-categorisation of OBC
- This decision provides an opening to ensure social justice in an efficient manner

Key Stats:

- The National Sample Survey (NSS) data from 2011-12 show that about 19% of the sample claims to be Dalit, 9% Adivasi, and 44% OBC
- Among the population aged 25-49, less than 7% have a college degree
- By most estimates, less than 3% of the whole population is employed in government and public-sector jobs
- Since reservations cover only half the college seats and public-sector jobs, the mismatch is obvious
- A vast proportion of the population eligible for reservations must still compete for a tiny number of reserved and non-reserved category jobs
- It is not surprising that there is tremendous internal competition within groups

Yardstick to determine marginalization within a particular caste:

- At the moment, the only reputable nationwide data on caste comes from the 1931 colonial Census and some of the ad hoc surveys conducted for specific castes
- The Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 was supposed to provide up-to-date comprehensive data
- In the SECC in 2015, it was found that about 4.6 million distinct caste names, including names of gotra, surname and phonetic variations were returned, making the results almost impossible to interpret
- For nearly 80 million individuals, caste data were believed to be erroneous
- Since then we have heard little about the quality of caste data in SECC and even less about its results
- Preparations for Census 2021 are ongoing
- There is still time to create an expert group to evaluate the methodology for collecting caste data and include it in the Census forms
- Losing this opportunity would leave us hanging for another 10 years without good data for undertaking sub-categorisation of OBC quota

Addressing caste based inequalities:

- A two-pronged approach that focusses on eliminating discrimination and expanding the proportion of population among the disadvantaged groups could be a solution

(1) Late Benefits

- The present policies focus on preferential admission to colleges and coveted institutions like IITs and IIMs
- But these benefits may come too late in the life of a Kurmi or Gujar child
- Their disadvantage begins in early childhood and grows progressively at higher levels of education
- We know little about what goes on in schools to create these disadvantages but improving quality of education for all must be a first step in addressing caste-based inequalities

(2) Benefits of reservations should be widely spread

- Use of the OBC quota must be limited to once in a person's lifetime, allowing for a churn in the population benefitting from reservations
- Linking the Aadhaar card to use of benefits makes it possible that individuals use their caste certificates only once
- It will help in spreading the benefits of reservations over a wider population

The way forward

- The present move by the government to rethink OBC quota could potentially be used to ensure that we have better data on caste-based disadvantages for future discourse
- It also indicates a mood that wants to ensure that the benefits of reservation are widely spread
- Increased attempts at linking benefits to Aadhaar allow us with an option to ensure that reservation benefits are not captured by a few.

4. [Business Of Cleanliness](#)

Context:

- The Swachh Bharat Mission plans to achieve safe sanitation for all by 2019
- There is also a well-defined process, for the different phases of the mission, across the sanitation value chain "build, use, maintain and treat (BUMT)"
- So a national policy is in place; cities, state governments must operationalise it.

Waste Management problem

- Nationally, we generate 7 million tonnes of fecal waste every day but there no systems in place to safely dispose this waste
- It bears disease-carrying bacteria and pathogens posing a serious threat to safe and healthy living.
- The truck operators can be monitored through GPS tracking process in order to ensure that they dump the waste at treatment plants/pre-determined sites.

Fecal sludge management system (FSM)

- It involves collecting, transporting and treating fecal sludge and septage from pit latrines, septic tanks or other

- onsite sanitation systems.
- This waste is then treated at septage treatment plants.
- The FSM ecosystem requires its stakeholders to collaborate closely.
- Citizens need to be aware about the importance of a regular schedule for desludging septic tanks.
- They must also be ready to pay part of the cost of running FS treatment plants through service charges.
- Sanitation workers are key to an effective FSM system. But with no proper disposal system or safety regulations in place, they face serious health hazards.

Advantages:

- The sludge is nutrient-rich. After treatment, it can be given to farmers for use as organic compost.
- It can even be treated and used for biogas, or to manufacture fuel pellets or ethanol.
- Once pathogens and bacteria are removed, the water can be used for irrigation, construction, by industry in cooling plants etc
- With appropriate training, sanitation workers can be empowered to own and run FSM businesses – much like the producer cooperatives of the agriculture sector.

Category: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [Suu Kyi promises to resettle –verified– Rohingya refugees](#)

Context:

- Rohingya’s crisis.**
- UN Secretary-General demanded an end to the military campaign and a better deal for the Muslim minority.

In News:

- Myanmar’s de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi pledged to hold rights violators to account over the Rohingya crisis but refused to blame the country’s army.
- Suu Kyi called for patience and understanding of the crisis which has driven some 4,21,000 Rohingya out of Myanmar.
- Suu Kyi vowed to resettle some refugees but offered no solutions to halt what the UN calls army-led –ethnic cleansing– in Rakhine state, where soldiers are accused of burning Rohingya out of their homes.

2. [India, Japan and U.S. present common front](#)

In news:

- Trilateral meeting in U.S:** At a trilateral meeting of Foreign Ministers of India, Japan and the U.S. endorsed one another’s position on key strategic issues in Asia
- India stood with the U.S. and Japan on the question of North Korea’s nuclear posture
- And India received support from the two on its position on the **China-led One Belt, One Road project** .
- The Ministers emphasised the need for ensuring freedom of navigation, respect for international law and peaceful resolution of disputes(possibly in South China sea context)

Focus areas for India

- Climate change, terrorism, people-centric migration and peacekeeping.

3. [India calls for a representative UN](#)

Context:

In news:

- India has extended support to efforts of U.S. President Donald Trump to reform the UN, saying it should include the expansion of the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the world body to keep pace with the changed times
- During a discussion on UN reform, Mr. Trump insisted that he had always seen the –great potential– of the organisation, but warned that –bureaucracy– was stopping it from realising its potential.
- India’s stance: world body should be reformed to keep pace with the changed times, including the expansion of its permanent or non-permanent members.

4. [Centre rethinks joining Hague child custody pact](#)

In news:

- Deals with international child custody cases.
 - Passed in 1980, the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction, which came into force in 1983, rules that in any child custody case, the court of the country where the child is a –habitual resident– will adjudicate who will get custody.
 - A total of ninety four countries, mostly developed nations in the Americas, Europe and Australia, are signatories to the Hague Convention
- India-U.S. Consular dialogue:**
- Between officials from the Ministries of External Affairs, Women and Child Development and Home and their counterparts in Washington.
 - The U.S. might push India to join the –Hague Convention– in this dialogue session.

- **Legal provisions:** The Hague Convention is circumventing the Indian system, and India can't abdicate its responsibility to Indian parents, mostly mothers, and their young children.
- **Separated parents:** American officials say the problem arises when one parent is in the U.S., while the other brings the child to India (their home country) to avoid an adverse decision in the U.S. court.
- **Women worst hit:** the worst affected in the cases covered by the convention are women, who form 68% of the parents that take or "abduct" their children to their home countries, and must be protected.

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE

1. [Rajnath reviews steps for cybersecurity](#)

Context:

- Growing number of financial frauds using cards and e-wallets.

In news:

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the preparedness of agencies to check financial cybercrimes.
- Singh asked agencies to strengthen surveillance and legal frameworks to check the menace.
- The agencies concerned and representatives of certain States highlighted the steps being taken to arrest the growing trend of cybercrime in the financial sector.
- An **inter-ministerial committee** may be set up to identify action points and monitor their implementation.
- **Key areas identified to be strengthened:** Capacity building of various stakeholders such as police officers, judicial officers, forensic scientists as well as officials in the banking sector.
- **Key Fact:**
 1. As per the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), a total number of 44,679, 49,455 and 50,362 cybersecurity incidents were observed during 2014, 2015 and 2016, respectively.
 2. The types of cybersecurity incidents included phishing, scanning/probing, website intrusions and defacements, virus/malicious code and denial of service attacks.

Nothing here for Today!!!

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F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

(c)

Topic: Science and Technology
Level: Moderate

Explanation

- **Gasification** is a process that converts organic or fossil fuel based carbonaceous materials into carbon monoxide, hydrogen and carbon dioxide. This is achieved by reacting the material at high temperatures ($>700\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$), **without combustion**, with a controlled amount of oxygen and/or steam. The resulting gas mixture is called syngas (from synthesis gas) or producer gas and is itself a fuel. [spoiler]

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper I

1. Critically examine the effects of globalization on the aged population in India.

GS Paper II

1. What do you understand by "The String of Pearls"? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps taken by India to counter this.

GS Paper III

1. Write a note on India's green energy corridor to alleviate the problems of conventional energy.