

Midday Meal Scheme

❖ Context

- From the next academic session, **Karnataka is likely to become the 13th state to provide eggs under the midday meal scheme.**
- It is among the **largest initiatives in the world to enhance nutrition levels** of school-going children through hot cooked meals.

❖ Key Highlights

- Successive surveys point out **high prevalence of malnutrition, anemia and low immunity** among children in many parts of the state.
- National Family Health Survey-V found **35% children under five stunted, and around 20% wasted.**
- Currently, 13 states and three Union Territories have eggs on their mid-day meal menus.

❖ About Midday Meal Scheme

- The current version of the programme, **renamed PM Poshan Shakti Nirman or PM Poshan in 2021.**
- It was **launched in 1995.**
- **Scheme Type** : Centrally Sponsored.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of Education.
- **Students up to Class VIII** are guaranteed one nutritional cooked meal at least 200 days in a year.
- Initially it was launched for students up to Class 5.
 - In 2007, the UPA government expanded it to Class 8.
- The **scheme covers 11.80 crore children** across Classes 1 to 8 (age group 6 to 14) in 11.20 lakh government and government-aided schools.
- It is a **legal entitlement** of all school-going children in primary and upper primary classes, through the **NFSA, 2013**, as well as the **Supreme Court's ruling.**

• Objective:

- To address **hunger and malnutrition.**
- To **increase enrolment and attendance** in school.
- To **improve socialization among castes.**
- To provide **employment at grassroot level especially to women.**

• Menu:

- The menu varies from one state or Union Territory to another.
- Authorities need to ensure that the nutritional component of the **meal is made up of rice, pulses, vegetables, oil and fat.**
- For **primary grades-** at least 450 calories and 12 gm protein. For **upper primary children-** 700 calories and 20 gm protein.

• Finances:

- **60:40** for normal states.
- **90:10** with the Northeastern states and Hilly States.
- **100%** of the costs in UTs without legislature.
- The central government provides grains and financing for other food.
- Costs for facilities, transportation, and labour are shared by the federal and state governments.

- **Regulation:** The **State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee (SSMC)** oversees the implementation of the scheme.

National Time Release Study, (NTRS) 2022

❖ Context

- Recently, the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** Chairman released the National Time Release Study, 2022.

❖ Key Findings of the Report

- The exercise is **being conducted as a part of its strategic commitment to improve global trade.**
- There has been an **improvement in the average cargo release time** for all the four-port categories in 2022 over the corresponding period of 2021. For instance, the average import release time has **improved by 16% at ACCs, 12% in the case of seaports and ICDs and 2% in ICPs.**
- With this improvement, the **ICPs have achieved the National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) target** release time to be achieved by 2023 whereas the other three-port categories have reached 75% of NTFAP target.
- NTRS 2022 and local TRSs have also made certain **recommendations to further reduce the average release time targets** to meet the targets set out in the NTFAP and improve the trade facilitative eco-system in the country.

❖ About TRS

- TRS is essentially a **performance measurement tool for assessing the cargo clearance process** of international trade, as recommended by the WTO under the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and the World Customs Organization(WCO).
- **Method Adopted:** The study **measures average cargo release time**, i.e. the time taken from the arrival of the cargo at the customs station to its eventual release for import or export as the case may be.
- **The TRS 2022 covered four-port categories: (1)** Seaports, (2) Air cargo complexes (ACCs), (3) Inland container depot (ICDs) and (4) Integrated check posts (ICPs).
- These ports **handle about 80% of the bills of entry (import documents) and 70% of the shipping bills (export documents).**

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Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition & Development) Act 1957

❖ Context

- The Cabinet has approved a policy of use of land acquired under the Act.

❖ Key Highlights

- The CBA Act **provides for acquisition of coal bearing lands** and their vesting in a Government company, free from any encumbrance.
- The approved policy provides clear policy framework for utilisation of following types of lands acquired under the **CBA Act**:
 - **Lands no longer suitable or economically viable** for coal mining activities; or
 - **Lands from which coal has been mined out / de-coaled** and such land has been reclaimed.
- The **Government coal companies**, such as **Coal India Ltd. (CIL)** and its subsidiaries shall **remain owners** of these lands.
- The policy allows **only leasing** of the land for the specified purposes given in the policy.
- The entities for leasing shall be selected through a transparent, fair and competitive bid process and mechanism in order to achieve optimal value.

❖ Activities allowed

- To set up Coal Washeries;
- To set up Conveyor Systems;
- To establish Coal Handling Plants;
- To construct Railway Sidings;
- Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Project Affected Families due to acquisition of land under the CBA Act or other land acquisition law;

- To set up thermal and renewable power projects;
- To set up or provide for coal development related infrastructure including compensatory afforestation;
- To provide Right of Way;
- Coal gasification and coal to chemical plants; and To set up or provide for energy related infrastructure.

❖ Benefits

- Prevent unauthorised encroachment.
- Entail avoidable expenditure on security and maintenance.
- Generation of a large number of direct and indirect employment.
- Help government companies in reducing their cost of operations.
- Government companies can set up coal related infrastructure and other projects on its own land by adopting different business models in partnership with private sector.
- It will make coal gasification projects viable as coal need not be transported to distant places.
- Rehabilitation of Project Affected Families.
- Encouraging domestic manufacturing and job creation.

News in Between the Lines

Tolling



❖ Context

- Recently, the **Ministry of Power** has given its nod to tolling amid the looming power crisis.

❖ Key Highlights

- Under it, states can allot up to **25% of their coal supply** to thermal power plants in other states.
- These states then can transmit electricity to the states with the linkage to reduce the need to transport coal. Using the facility, states will be able to utilise their coal linkage in plants closer to mines, **reducing the need to transport coal**.

❖ Power Crisis

- Temperatures have shot up across many parts of the country with the early onset of summer, leading to a rise in the demand for power.
- Instances of **power outages** have been reported in several states.
- Normally, a **power plant must maintain 26 days of coal stock**.
- The **Central Electricity Authority(CEA)** tracks 173 plants for critical levels of inventory. Of these, **155 are not near to coal mines and have nearly 28% of the stock compared to normal scenario**.
- High dues of discoms to generation companies and the eventual delay in payment to CIL has also complicated the scenario.

PaaS Model

❖ Context

- Tesla Power USA has said that it will introduce its PaaS model in the Indian market.

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❖ Key Highlights

- Under, the **Power as a service** model, **batteries and energy solutions will be provided on lease to Indian consumers.**
- It will help reduce the burden of upfront investment, maintenance & replacement of batteries for a long duration.

UN' DESA Report

❖ Context

- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with more than 60 international agencies, including the UN system and international financial institutions, recently released a report.
- The report is on **financing to achieve UN development goals for 2030.**

❖ Key Highlights

- The pandemic plunged **77 million more people into extreme poverty last year.** 812 million people lived in extreme poverty - **on \$1.90 a day or less** - in 2019, and by **2021** amid the pandemic, the number had risen to **889 million.**
- Many developing countries couldn't recover because of the crippling cost of debt repayments. It says **poorest developing countries**, on average, **pay 14 per cent of their revenue for interest on their debts**, with many forced to cut budgets for education, infrastructure and capital spending as a result of the pandemic. **Rich developed countries pay only 3.5 per cent.**



Kangaroo

❖ Context

- Recently, **Three dead kangaroos were discovered in Siliguri.** This was followed by four kangaroos being rescued alive, among which one died.

❖ Key Highlights

- The animals had been treated badly and were extremely weak.
- It is believed that the traffickers had abandoned the animals on the road out of fear after seeing police barricades or personnel carrying out checks.
- The incident came as shocking to forest and police authorities.
- **Jalpaiguri and its vicinity have become a favourite with those who are involved in illegal wildlife trafficking.**
- The **borders of three of India's neighbours - Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh** lie close to the city and district as these are located near the strategic '**Chicken's Neck**' corridor. Myanmar and China are also not too far away. According to environmental experts, trafficking through the Jalpaiguri route had been common.
- The Jalpaiguri route was being used to traffic wildlife mainly to **China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and via Bangladesh, to Persian Gulf countries.**

❖ About Kangaroo

- Kangaroos are **indigenous to Australia and New Guinea.**
- Kangaroos are the only large animals to use hopping as a means of locomotion. They are **herbivores.** **IUCN conservation status:** Least concern.



Global Compact on NCDs

❖ Context

- Governments of **Ghana and Norway** formed the first group to fast-track progress towards reducing **Noncommunicable diseases (NCD)** deaths by a third.

❖ Key Highlights

- The **first meeting of the 'Global Compact on NCDs'** that will strategise reduction of preventable deaths from diabetes, cancer, heart and lung disease, and promote mental health and well-being, **will be held in September 2022.**
- The decision to form the group was taken at the **first International Strategic Dialogue on NCDs and the Sustainable Development Goals**, held in Accra, Ghana April 12, 2022. It was **hosted by WHO**, along with the governments of Ghana and Norway.
- **According to the WHO:** NCDs are largely preventable and treatable.
 - The NCDs kill 7 out of 10 people globally from risk factors like tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and air pollution.

Non-Communicable Diseases



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Customs Duties



❖ Context

- Government has **exempted the import of cotton from customs duties** from 14th April 2022 to 30th September 2022.

❖ Key Highlights

- Previously, the import of cotton **attracted a 5 percent basic customs duty** and another 5 percent Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC).
- **Significance:** The exemption will **benefit the textile chain-yarn, fabric, garments and made-ups** and will also **provide relief to consumers**.
 - Textile exports are also to be benefitted from this move.

❖ About Custom Duty

- Customs duty refers to the **tax imposed on goods when they are transported across international borders**.
- In simple terms, it is the tax that is levied on import and export of goods.
- The government uses this duty to **raise its revenues, safeguard domestic industries, and regulate movement of goods**. Custom duty in India is **defined under the Customs Act, 1962**, and all matters related to it fall under the **Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC)**.
- **Types of custom duty:** Basic Customs Duty (BCD), Countervailing Duty (CVD), Additional Customs Duty or Special CVD, Protective Duty and Anti-dumping Duty.

Cardless Cash Withdrawals At ATM



❖ Context

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed to make **cardless cash withdrawals available at all ATMs**, through the Unified Payment Interface (UPI).

❖ Key Highlights

- Under the cardless cash withdrawal facility, a **customer is not required to use his/her debit or credit cards while withdrawing cash from ATMs**.
- Cardless cash **withdrawals are to be authenticated via UPI**.
- So, ATMs are expected to show an option for withdrawing cash using UPI.
- Once an user selects this option, they can input the amount to be withdrawn. A **QR code will be generated on the ATM**. Users will then need to scan that code via their UPI app, and enter a password to withdraw cash from the ATM.
- **Until now, only fund transfers between accounts were enabled via UPI**. With this option, consumers can take cash out from ATMs without a card.
- **Banks which have this facility:** At present, cardless cash withdrawal through ATMs is limited only to a few banks. State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Punjab National Bank (PNB) are among the few to offer this facility.
- **Significance:** Cardless cash withdrawals will enhance security of cash withdrawal transactions. Besides, it would help prevent frauds like card skimming and card cloning.

Malcolm Adiseshiah Award



❖ Context

- Recently, **renowned Indian economist and political commentator Prabhat Patnaik** has been selected for the 2022 **Malcolm Adiseshiah Award**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The award is annually given by the **Malcolm and Elizabeth Adiseshiah Trust** to an outstanding social scientist selected from nominations received by a specially constituted national jury.
- The award comprises a **citation and prize money of ₹2 lakh**.
- It will be presented at a function to be held in Chennai, the date of which will be announced later. **About Malcolm Sathiyathan Adiseshiah (18 April 1910 – 21 Nov 1994):**
 - He was an Indian development economist and educator.
 - In 1976 he was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award. In 1998, **UNESCO created 'The Malcolm Adiseshiah International Literacy Prize'** in recognition of his contribution to education and literacy.

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