

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

❖ Context

- According to the first independent impact assessment of the government's flagship Ujjwala programme, greater penetration and usage of LPG as a cooking fuel is estimated to have prevented at least 1.5 lakh pollution-related premature deaths in the year 2019 alone.
- It also helped in avoiding at least 1.8 million tonnes of PM2.5 emissions that year.

❖ Key Highlights

- Researchers team adopted the methodology used by the **Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study**, published in The Lancet in October 2020.
- The GBD study is coordinated by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.
- GBD named **air pollution as the fourth biggest killer** worldwide (amongst 286 different causes of death), responsible for about 6.67 million deaths in 2019.
- That study had found that about **6.1 lakh deaths in India** in 2019 could be attributed to household air pollution.
- It had considered only those households that did not have access to LPG.
- Researchers found that if such secondary usage of biomass was also taken into account, **indoor air pollution-related deaths in 2019 rose to 10.2 lakh**.
- **Other Recent Survey:**
 - A survey was **commissioned by the Health Ministry** and carried out in six states,
 - It has shown a **vast improvement** not just in **prevalence of respiratory diseases** but also in **general health conditions** in villages with high coverage of Ujjwala connections.
- The survey had found 50% improvement in general health conditions in villages of **Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar** with high coverage of Ujjwala connections.

❖ About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

- Launched in 2016.
- **Objective:**
 - To **provide LPG connection to households** that were using traditional fuels like wood, cow-dung cakes or coal for cooking purposes which release a lot of pollutants and are damaging to the health of the people, particularly women engaged in the kitchen.
- **Nodal Ministry:**
 - Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- **Key Features:**
 - A deposit-free LPG connection is given to eligible with **financial assistance of Rs 1,600** per connection by the Centre.
 - Release of LPG connection under this Scheme shall be in the **name of the women belonging to the BPL family**.
 - Under the Union Budget for FY 21-22, provision for **release of additional 1 Crore LPG connections** under the PMUY scheme has been made.
 - In this phase, special facilities have been given to **migrant families**.
- **Target:**
 - The target was to provide **8 crore new LPG connections by March 2020**.
- **Achievements :**
 - According to government figures, this target was **achieved in September 2019**.
 - 99.8 percent of the over 28 crore households in India now have access to LPG, up from 61.9 per cent in 2015.

MGNREGA Scheme

❖ Context

- According to a **Parliamentary Standing Committee report** submitted to the Lok Sabha, various **issues are hampering the MGNREGA** (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) scheme.

❖ Key Highlights

- **Fake job cards, widespread corruption, late uploading of muster rolls, and huge pending payments for wages and materials** are among the issues.
- Genuine **laborers not getting their dues** while money keeps changing hands due to collusion of unscrupulous elements surrounding the implementation of the scheme.
- The Committee said that study, visits and observations had shown that "**rozgar sevak-s** are in the habit of filling up kachha muster at the start and go to the Block once a week for online uploading of muster-rolls.
- It noted that if the muster-roll is not updated and uploaded within the stipulated time, it could not be backdated, causing a loss in payment.
- Pending wages amounted to ₹4,060 crore, while material component payments were pending to the tune of ₹9,000 crore. The panel found it "**alarming**" that in such a scenario, the budget estimates for the scheme for 2022-23 were **reduced from the ₹78,000 crore** sought by the Department of Rural Development, **to ₹73,000 crore**.

Face to Face Centres



❖ About MGNREGA Scheme

- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 introduced the scheme.
- The scheme was introduced as a social measure that guarantees **“the right to work”**.
- It **guarantees 100 days of work a year** to every rural household with an aim to enhance the livelihood security of people.
- In 2010, NREGA was renamed as MGNREGA.
- **Within 15 days** of submitting the application or from the day work is demanded, wage employment will be provided to the applicant.
 - Applicant will get **unemployment allowance** in case employment is not provided within fifteen days of submitting the application.
- The Act currently covers all districts except for those that have a **100% urban population**.
- The **Ministry of Rural Development (MRD)** in association with the state governments monitors the implementation of the scheme.
- **Social Audit** of MGNREGA works is mandatory, which lends to accountability and transparency.
- It is the **Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat** which approves the shelf of works under MGNREGA and fix their priority.



❖ POSH Act

❖ Context

- The Kerala High Court asked organisations associated with the film industry to take steps to constitute a joint committee to deal with cases of sexual harassment of women, in line with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013.

❖ Vishakha Guidelines

- The **legally binding guidelines** were laid down by the SC in a **judgement in 1997** in a case filed by women’s rights groups, one of which was Vishaka.
- They had filed a PIL over the alleged gangrape of Bhanwari Devi, a social worker from Rajasthan. In 1992, she had prevented the marriage of a one-year-old girl, leading to the alleged gangrape in an act of revenge.
- The court, for the first time, drew upon an international human rights law instrument, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**.
- The court issued a writ of mandamus and the following directions for prevention:
 - The court **defined what constitutes sexual harassment**. For this purpose, sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as:
 - physical contact and advances;
 - a demand or request for sexual favours;
 - sexually coloured remarks;
 - showing pornography;
 - any other unwelcome physical verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.
- It further imposed **three key obligations** on institutions — **prohibition, prevention, redress**.
- It mandated for organisations, private or public sector, to establish a **Complaint committee** for redressal of sexual harassment complaints.

❖ About the POSH Act

- The 2013 Act broadened these guidelines.
- It mandated that every employer must constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** at each office or branch **with 10 or more employees**.
- If any establishment has less than 10 employees, the complaint can be made to the **local complaint committee** (constituted by the District officer).
- **Rights of all women working or visiting any workplace**, in any capacity, were **protected** under the Act.
- It is **not compulsory** for the aggrieved victim to file a complaint for the ICC to act. **Any member of the ICC “shall” render “all reasonable assistance”** to her to complain in writing.
- If the woman cannot complain because of “physical or mental incapacity or death or otherwise”, **her legal heir may do so**.
- The complaint must be made **within three months** of the incident. The timeline **can be extended** by the ICC.
- The ICC may **either forward the victim’s complaint to the police**, or it can **start an inquiry** that has to be **completed within 90 days**.
- The ICC has powers similar to those of a **civil court**.
- If the allegations of sexual harassment are proved, the ICC recommends that the employer take action “in accordance with the provisions of the service rules” of the company.
- After the recommendations, the aggrieved woman or the respondent can appeal in court within 90 days.



News in Between the Lines

ExoMars Mission



❖ Context

- Recently, The ExoMars rover mission has been **suspended by the European Space Agency (ESA)** in the wake of Moscow's ongoing war on Ukraine.

❖ Key Highlights

- It was built in **partnership with Russia**.
- It was due to launch a robotic rover in September, 2022.

• About ExoMars Mission

- ExoMars (Exobiology on Mars) is an astrobiology programme of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Russian space agency Roscosmos.
- **Objectives:**
 - To **search for signs of past life on Mars**,
 - To investigate how the **Martian water** and **geochemical environment varies**.
 - To investigate **atmospheric trace gasses** and their sources and by doing so demonstrate the **technologies for a future Mars sample-return mission**.
- The programme **comprises two missions**.
 - The **first launched in March 2016** and consists of the **Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO)** and **Schiaparelli**, an entry, descent and landing demonstrator module.
 - **TGO's main objectives** are to **search for evidence of methane** and other trace atmospheric gasses that could be signatures of active biological or geological processes.
 - The **Schiaparelli probe** crashed during its attempt to land on Mars.
 - The **second comprises a rover and surface science platform**.
 - As of March 2022, the launch window is under review.
- The **Rosalind Franklin rover** will carry a drill and a suite of instruments dedicated to exobiology and geochemistry research.
- The 2016 TGO will act as a relay for the surface mission.

e-Tourist VISA (e-TV)



❖ Context

- Recently, the Center restored the **electronic tourist visa (e-TV) facility** for 156 countries.

❖ Key Highlights

- Currently valid e-tourist visa **issued for five years**, which was suspended since March 2020, shall stand restored to nationals of 156 eligible countries with immediate effect.
- **All land and riverine borders**, including the Attari-Wagah post along Pakistan, will continue to **remain shut**, except for those with special permission.
- The foreign nationals on tourist and e-tourist visas **will be able to enter into India only through:**
 - Designated Sea Immigration Check Posts (IPs) or
 - Airport ICPs by flights, including those under the 'Vande Bharat Mission' or
 - 'air bubble' scheme or by any flights as allowed by the DGCA or Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- In no case, the foreign nationals will be allowed to enter through **land border or riverine routes on tourist visa or e-tourist visa**.
- The government instructions **will not be applicable to Afghanistan nationals** who will continue to be governed by the separate instructions issued by the Union Home Ministry regarding grant of -e-Emergency X-Misc visa.

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Eat Smart Cities Challenge



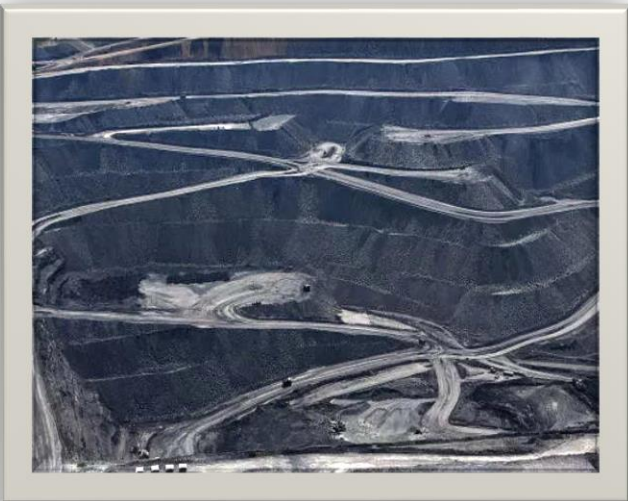
❖ Context

- Recently, the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** announced eleven winning cities for the EatSmart Cities Challenge.
- These cities will now enter the **deep engagement stage of the challenge** wherein projects undertaken in pilot stage will be scaled up in a sustainable manner.

❖ Key Highlights

- All cities under the Smart Cities Mission, capitals of States/UTs and cities with a **population of more than 500,000** were invited to participate in the challenge.
- **Nodal Agencies:**
 - The challenge was **launched by MoHUA** in collaboration with **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** in 2021.
- **Objectives:**
 - To **scale up the Eat Right India approach to city level.**
 - To **start a movement that inspires all cities to transform their food systems** and strengthen the food safety and regulatory environment.
 - To **build awareness** among the consumers and urge them to **make better food choices** in India's cities.

Mahanadi Coalfields



❖ Context

- Recently, Mahanadi Coalfields became the **largest coal producing company in India.**

❖ Key Highlights

- The company **produced 7.62 lakh tonne of dry fuel** which is the highest in a day during the current financial year reaching **157.7 MT** with a **growth of around 16 per cent over the last financial year.**

❖ About Mahanadi Coalfields

- Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) is one of the **major coal producing companies of India.**
- It is one of the eight **subsidiaries of Coal India Limited.**
- Mahanadi Coalfields Limited was **carved out of South Eastern Coalfields Limited in 1992** with its headquarters at Sambalpur.
- It has its **coal mines spread across Odisha.**
- It has a **total seven open cast mines and three underground mines** under its fold.
- **Headquarters-** Sambalpur, Odisha, India.
- **Coal Type-** Bituminous.

Kamikaze Drones






❖ Context

- Kamikaze or suicide drones are part of tranche of weapons being sent by US to help Ukraine in war.

❖ Key Highlights

- Also called **Switchblade drones** because their bladelike wings spring out on the launch, manufactured by AeroVironment Inc.
- These are **small unmanned aircraft** packed with **explosives** and can be flown directly at a tank or a group of troops, and explodes on hitting.
- Unlike some drones like US' Predator and Reaper who fire missiles, switchblade drones are **missiles themselves.**
- They are **more than 20 times cheaper.**
- **Capabilities:**
 - Difficult to detect on radar.
 - Can be programmed to hit targets, based on facial recognition, without human intervention. Has cameras which provide real time video for centralised view of operation.
 - A feature that allows operator to control the blast radius.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be carried in a backpack. • Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, Israel have similar versions. Iranian backed militias have used small drones in attacks of US bases in Iraq; Houthi rebels used to blow up Saudi oil facilities in 2019.
<p>Bharat Urea</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Centre had floated a concept note to sell urea under one brand, Bharat Urea, across the country. ❖ Key Highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies will be asked to sell urea under - “One nation, One fertiliser” concept. • Centre bear about 90% of subsidy in case of urea. • The government had observed that since companies get the freight subsidy from the government, they don't hesitate for criss-cross movement of fertilisers for longer distances. • Also brand-wise demand of fertilisers in the specific areas by the farmers is one of the reasons of criss-cross movement. • Farmers buy fertilisers at MRPs (maximum retail price) below their normal supply-and-demand-based market rates or what it costs to produce/import them. • The difference, which varies according to plant-wise production cost and import price, is borne by the Centre as a subsidy. • The MRPs of non-urea fertilisers are decontrolled or fixed by the companies. The Centre, however, pays a flat per-tonne subsidy on these nutrients to ensure they are priced at “reasonable levels”.
<p>UPI Lite</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NPCI set to launch UPI Lite for small value transactions in offline mode. ❖ Key Highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPCI has designed the UPI Lite – on-device wallet functionality for UPI user. • UPI Lite transactions will be offered without AFA or a UPI PIN. • In the first phase, UPI Lite will process transactions in near offline mode that is debit offline and credit online. • At a later point, UPI Lite will process the transactions in complete offline mode that is debit and credit both offline. • The upper limit of an UPI Lite payment transaction will be ₹200 while the total limit of UPI Lite balance for an on-device wallet will be ₹2,000 at any point of time. • Various studies on payment systems have observed that about 75 per cent of the total volume of retail transactions (including cash) in India are below ₹100. About 50 per cent of the total UPI transactions have a transaction value of up to ₹200. A user of UPI App will have the option to enable UPI Lite on their UPI app. Once enabled, the user can allocate funds from their bank account to UPI Lite. • However, replenishment of funds in UPI Lite will be allowed only in online mode with additional factor authentication (AFA) or using UPI AutoPay.
<p>Green Triangle</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As part of the ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ to commemorate India’s 75th year of independence, a “Green Triangle” named after Mahatma Gandhi was jointly inaugurated in Madagascar’s capital Antananarivo. ❖ Key Highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor of Antananarivo and India’s Ambassador to Madagascar inaugurated the green space at a special ceremony. • The Mayor appreciated the embassy’s effort in greening the area. • Madagascar has a large diaspora from the Indian state of Gujarat.

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