

## Vidya Samiksha Kendra

### ❖ Context

- PM visited the centre, also known as **Command & Control Centre 2.0** of the **Gujarat Education Department** at **Gandhinagar**.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- The **state of the art data driven centre** is a **surveillance system** which tracks.
  - Enrolment, attendance, learning outcomes, drop-outs of school children.
  - School accreditation.
  - Monitors schools, teachers and block and cluster resource centre co-ordinators.

### ❖ 'Evolution'

- Based on the **National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR)** Framework.
- It is a much **upgraded version** of the state government's realtime technology enabled **surveillance system**, to "keep an eye" on over **1.95 lakh school teachers**, that was launched in Gujarat in 2019.
- Its aim was to **ensure teachers stick to their assigned tasks on a daily basis**, as reports concluded that poor monitoring of teachers resulted in absenteeism and "non-seriousness".

### ❖ Functioning

- The new centre monitors **55,000 primary and secondary government schools** and hand holds **4 lakh teachers** to help improve learning outcomes of nearly **1.2 crore students**.
- Centre has over **1,000 crore data sets** collected for over one crore students.
- Used for **interoperability of data systems** – that exist in silos, like student and teacher attendance data, CRC app data, semester assessment, CCC monitoring data, U-DISE, periodic assessment tests (PAT).
- **Preliminary child tracking system** - Using **Machine learning** and **AI** of PAT and school attendance, the system make **prediction or forecast** on students most likely to migrate from where to which areas and their possibility of drop-out .
- **Students** have been **categorised as high, medium and no risk** and tracking of such high risk students in each cluster will help check their dropping out from schools.
- Based on the analysis, the CCC has categorised drop-out of students into **two-seasonal migration** and **result and attendance oriented**.
- Teachers can work on areas where students require more clarity by analysing the PAT reports.

## Multi Level Marketing and Pyramid Scheme

### ❖ Context

- The ED has provisionally attached assets of a company, accused of running a pyramid fraud in the guise of a multi-level marketing network.

- FIR against the company has been registered under the **Prize Chits and Money Circulation Scheme (Banning Act) 1978**.
- ED has observed that the **prices of most of the products offered by the company are exorbitant** as compared to the alternative popular products of reputed manufacturers available in the open market.
- The entire focus was to induce public to join the company and become members and **propagating how members can become rich by becoming members**.

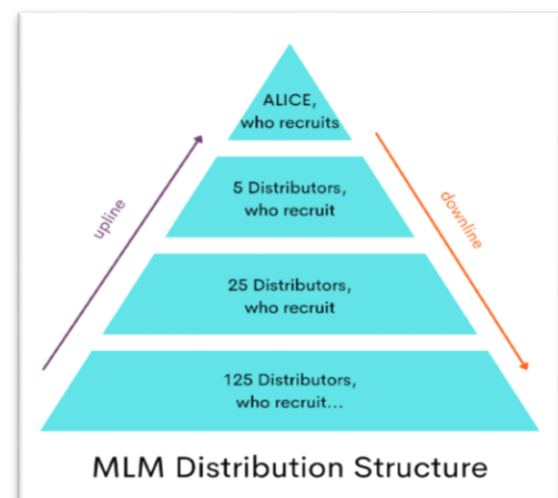
### ❖ Definition Of Money Circulation Scheme Under The Act

- "Any scheme, by whatever name called, for the making of quick or easy money, or for the receipt of any money or valuable thing as the consideration for a promise to pay money, on any event or contingency relative or applicable to the enrolment of members into the scheme, whether or not such money or thing is derived from the entrance money of the members of such scheme or periodical subscriptions".
- Pyramid schemes are not explicitly defined under the Act but are covered under the aforesaid definition.

### ❖ Similarities And Differences Between The Two

- In MLM method, the **company sell their products through a network of independent sales representatives** who recruit their own distributor networks to sell the product and who in turn get their distributors.
- It is similar to **Pyramid model** in which more and more individuals are added to the base of pyramid over time, resulting in expansion of business, with **commission getting distributed to all in the chain in a fixed percentage**.
- The **difference** lies in the **underlying derivative and sale structure**.

MLM	Pyramid Scheme
Company pays revenue depending upon sales by a distributor.	Company pays solely on continuous recruitment of members.



## Face to Face Centres

## China-Solomon Islands Security Agreement



### ❖ Context

- China said that it had signed an **inter-governmental framework agreement** on security cooperation with the Solomon Islands.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- According to China, under the agreement, the two sides will conduct cooperation in such areas as:
  - Maintenance of social order.
  - Protection of the safety of people's lives and property.
  - Humanitarian assistance and natural disaster response.
- Amid concern from Australia, New Zealand and the US, the Solomon Islands said there was **no agreement for a Chinese military base**. China has a military base in Djibouti in Horn of Africa, which was officially opened in 2017.

### ❖ About Solomon Islands

- Located in the **Pacific ocean**, it consists of **six major islands** and over 900 smaller islands in Oceania, to the east of Papua New Guinea and northwest of Vanuatu.
- It has a land area of 28,400 square kilometres and an approx. population of 6.5 lakhs. Its **capital, Honiara**, is located on the **largest island, Guadalcanal**.
- It became **independent from Britain in 1978** with adoption of **constitutional monarchy**.

## Global Ayush Investment & Innovation Summit 2022



### ❖ Context

- The PM inaugurated the **three day summit at Gandhinagar, Gujarat** that will witness a dialogue with entrepreneurs, industry, startups and other stakeholders to encourage them to increase investment for innovation in Ayush sector.
- The sector has grown from **\$ 3 BN in 2014 to \$18 BN**.

### ❖ Key Initiatives Announced At The Summit

- A **special Ayush mark** for Ayush products which will give people all over the world the confidence of quality Ayush products.
- Development of a **network of Ayush parks** to encourage the promotion, research and manufacturing of Ayush products across the country.
- A new category named '**Ayush Aahar**' which will greatly facilitate the producers of herbal nutritional supplements.
- Launch of **Ayush Export Promotion Council**.
- Launch of four **Ayush ICT initiatives** which includes Ayush Information Hub, AyuSoft, Ayush Next and Ayush GIS.
- Release of a comic book named '**Professor Ayushman**', to generate awareness. India will soon introduce a **special Ayush visa category**.

## Pure Green Hydrogen Plant



### ❖ Context

- **Oil India Limited (OIL)** has commissioned **India's First 99.999% pure Green Hydrogen pilot plant** at Jorhat Pump Station, **Assam**.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- The plant has an installed capacity of 10 kg per day. The aim is to raise it to 30 Kg. The plant produces Green Hydrogen from the electricity generated by the existing 500kW Solar plant **using a 100 kW Anion Exchange Membrane (AEM) Electrolyser array**.
- The **use of AEM technology** is being used for the **first time in India**.
- An anion exchange membrane (AEM) is a **semipermeable membrane generally made from ionomers** and designed to conduct anions but **reject gases such as oxygen or hydrogen**.
- An **ionomer** is a polymer **composed of repeat units of both electrically neutral repeating units and ionised units covalently bonded** to the polymer backbone
- The ionised units are often carboxylic acid groups.
- The company has also initiated a detailed **study in collaboration with IIT Guwahati on blending of Green Hydrogen with Natural Gas** and its effect on the existing infrastructure of OIL.

## Face to Face Centres



## MCLR



### ❖ Context

- SBI has raised the Marginal Cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR) for the first time in three years.

### ❖ What is MCLR?

- Introduced by the RBI in **2016**.
- Aimed at ensuring **faster transmission** of repo rate changes.
- Designed to be a transparent rate transmission mechanism as against its predecessor -- the **benchmark prime lending rate or BPLR**.
- **Components of MCLR** - Base repo rate, Operating costs, current cost of carry-in cash reserve ratio and tenor premium.
- MCLR proved effective compared to BPLR as the former factored the current cost of money, whereas **BPLR was based on average cost**.
- **Over 60 % of corporates borrow based on MCLR**. Hence, corporates may bear the brunt of a MCLR hike.

### ❖ Why are Banks Increasing the Rate?

- RBI recently announced the **Standing Deposit facility** as the floor rate for liquidity adjustment facility.
- In effect, it incentivises banks to park more money with the RBI as SDF can earn **3.75 %** interest as against the reverse repo at 3.35 %.
- **Banks may raise their deposit rates to attract more money into the system**. As a precursor, they are tinkering with the lending rate so that the impact on banks' profitability can be minimised.

## Nutrient Based Subsidy



### ❖ Context

- The **Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)** has recommended **revision of nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) rates** for the upcoming kharif season based on the **average international prices of fertiliser** in March 2022 "as a **special case** this year".

### ❖ Role of IMC

- The **IMC, headed by Secretary (Fertiliser)**, has representatives from the ministries of Finance and Agriculture and NITI Aayog.
- It recommends NBS rates for nutrients — **Nitrogen (N), Phosphate (P), Potash (K) and Sulphur (S)** — before the start of a financial year.
- The final decision is taken by the Union Cabinet.

### ❖ About the Subsidy

- The Centre is making available fertilisers, namely Urea and 22 grades of P&K fertilisers (including DAP) to farmers at subsidised prices through fertiliser manufacturers/ importers.
- The **subsidy on P&K fertilisers is being governed by NBS Scheme w.e.f. 01.04.2010**. The subsidy is **released to fertiliser companies** as per NBS rates so that they can make available fertilisers to farmers at **affordable price**.
- **Urea** is being provided to the farmers at a **statutorily notified Maximum Retail Price (MRP)**. The **difference** between the delivered cost of fertilisers at farm gate and net market realisation by the urea units is given as **subsidy to the urea manufacturer / importer** by the Government of India.
- In **Union Budget 2022-23**, the **government** has allocated a combined amount of **Rs 1.09 lakh crore** for fertiliser subsidy — Rs 42,000 crore for P&K fertilisers and Rs 67,187 lakh crore for urea — which is lower than **last year's figure of Rs 1.62 lakh crore**.
- However, according to experts, the fertiliser subsidy figure is expected to cross Rs 1.75 lakh crore.

## Freebies And Sub-national Bankruptcy

### ❖ Context

- **Fifteenth Finance Commission** chairperson cautioned that India could face the prospect of sub-national bankruptcies if States continued to dole out freebies to influence the electorate.

## Face to Face Centres





### ❖ Key Points Addressed

- Governments across the political spectrum are now increasingly attracted to freebie politics. **Indirect/Direct reference** was made to:
  - **Punjab** which is expected to spend an estimated ₹17,000 crore to implement recently announced 'freebies' such as 300 units of free power per household.
  - **Rajasthan** decision to revert to the old pension scheme for its employees would translated into just 6% of the population capturing benefits 56% of the State's revenues that go into its pension and salary expenditure.
- State unable to pay its bills, immediately rushes to the Centre for help.
- The Centre beyond the devolution of revenues to the States as per the Commission's advice, can only help States during times of distress or disasters
- **Subsidies are needed for merit and public goods** that have larger benefits, such as the public distribution system, employment guarantee schemes and greater support for education and health sectors. Free power, free water, free fertilisers distract from environmental objectives also.

### Health Star Rating System



### ❖ Context

- Global experts have written to Union Health Ministry that the new system proposed by FSSAI would not be effective in reducing the intake of unhealthy foods.

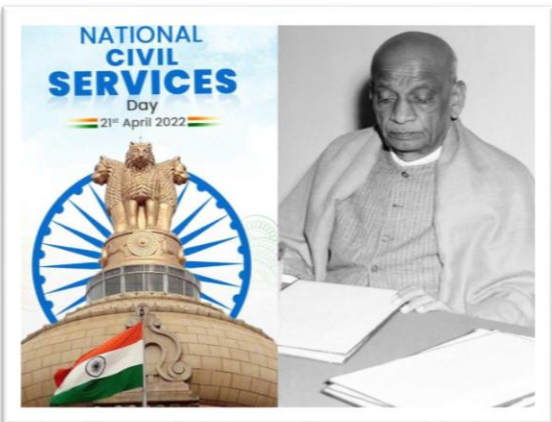
### ❖ About The Rating

- In a meeting in February 2022, the FSSAI had decided in its **draft regulations for front of package labelling (FOPL)** to adopt the "health-star rating system".
- The system gives a product **1/2 a star to 5 stars**.
- The decision was based on the recommendations of a study by the IIM-Ahmedabad the regulator had commissioned in September 2021.
- In the same meeting, the regulator decided that FOPL implementation could be made voluntary for a period of four years.

### ❖ What Do The Experts Claim ?

- Health Star Rating (HSR) system adopted in countries like **Australia and New Zealand** has **not resulted into any meaningful behaviour change**.
- The system "**misrepresents nutrition science**".
- The underlying premise of the HSR is that **positive ingredients** such as fruits and nuts **can offset negative nutrients** such as calories, saturated fat, total sugar, sodium to calculate the number of stars ascribed to a product.
- There is **no empirical evidence** to suggest that adding these ingredients will lessen the negative impact of these foods on the body. They argue that "**warning labels**" instead have been **most effective** in various countries.

### National Civil Service (NCS) Day



### ❖ Context

- **National Civil Service (NCS) Day** is marked by the Union government of India on **21st April** annually. The day is solely dedicated to India's civil servants in various departments.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is also known as Sardar Patel and the '**Iron Man of India**'. He was the first deputy Prime Minister of India.
- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played an important role in the **Indian Freedom Movement**. On April 21, 1947, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel inaugurated the All India Services. Then, the previous **Indian Civil Services** under British India were changed to **All India Services** subject to complete Indian control.
- **Charles Cornwallis** is known as the **father of the Indian Civil Service** because of his contribution to reforming and modernising the civil services in India.
- The foundation of civil services in India was laid by **Warren Hastings**, but it was Cornwallis who took on the responsibility of bringing a reform.
- **Significance:** On NCS Day, the Centre discusses and evaluates the work of various departments under its overview.

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### Face to Face Centres

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