

Date: 18th & 19th JAN 2024

(Useful for UPSC/WBPSC/SSC Exams.)

➤ Scheme to be implemented in next two years (2024-25 and 2025-26) of 15th Finance Commission Cycle.

➤ The revamped Scheme for Administrative Reforms has 2 verticals,

⊕ Scheme for Comprehensive System for Redressal of Public Grievances:

- ◆ **Quality Redressal:** Taking forward the 10-Step CPGRAMS reforms (refer image) aimed at improving quality of grievance redressal .
- ◆ **AI-Assisted Redressal:** Reducing timelines by developing AI assisted Public Grievance Redressal System (CPGRAMS).
- ◆ **Unified Grievance Redressal:** Project will integrate all other grievance portals thus making the CPGRAMS single largest interface for public grievances.
- ◆ **Capacity building:** Deeper technology adoption, capacity building of grievance redressal officers etc.

⊕ Scheme for Administrative Reforms:

- ◆ **Strategic Allocation:** Scheme seeks to utilize resources for International Exchange and Cooperation activities, National e-Governance Awards Scheme etc.

➤ Significance of Revamped Scheme

⊕ Seamless service delivery to citizens, efficient decision-making, strengthening accountability and transparency with timely grievance redressal etc.

➤ About Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

- ⊕ An online platform available to citizens 24x7 to lodge their grievances to the public authorities on any subject related to service delivery.
- ⊕ Issues which are not taken up for redress are RTI matters, court related etc

10-step CPGRAMS Reforms process

Universalization of CPGRAMS 7.0
Technological Enhancements
Language Translation - CPGRAMS Portal in 22 scheduled languages along with English
Grievance Redressal Index
Feedback Call Centre
One Nation-One Portal - Integration of State Portals and other Gol portals
Inclusivity and Outreach
Training and Capacity Building
Monitoring Process
Data Strategy Unit

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) Notified Incentive Schemes For Production of Green Ammonia and Green Hydrogen

➤ **Green Hydrogen:** It is the hydrogen produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen (electrolysis) using renewable energy.

➤ **Green Ammonia:** It is ammonia produced using renewable energy sources. ⊕

Traditionally ammonia produced through Haber-Bosch process.

➤ Recent Schemes have been notified under Mode 2A (Green Ammonia) and Mode 2B (Green Hydrogen) of Component-II of Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Programme under National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM). ⊕

Schemes Aim: To maximize the production, enhance cost-competitiveness and encourage large scale utilization of Green Ammonia and Green hydrogen.

⊕ **Implementing Agency:**

- ◆ For Mode-2A (Green Ammonia) scheme, Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) under MNRE.
- ◆ For Mode-2B (Green Hydrogen) scheme, Oil & Gas companies and Centre for High Technology (CHT) - nominated by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

➤ **About National Green Hydrogen Mission:**

⊕ **Period:** FY 2023-24 to FY 2029-30.

⊕ **Objective:** To make India a Global Hub for producing, utilizing, and exporting Green Hydrogen.

⊕ **Mission Sub Components:** SIGHT Programme, Pilot projects, R&D programme, and Skill Development.

- ◆ **Under SIGHT,** two distinct financial incentive mechanisms,
 - » **Component I** - Targeting domestic manufacturing of electrolyzers.
 - » **Component II** - Production of Green Hydrogen.

World Economic Forum's AI Governance Alliance (AIGA) Calls for Global Efforts for Inclusive Access to Advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- **AIGA (launched in 2023)** aims to accelerate the development of **ethical guidelines** and **governance frameworks for Generative AI**.
 - ⊖ **Generative AI** is a type of AI technology that can produce various types of content, including **text, imagery, audio and synthetic data**.
 - ⊖ **World Economic Forum (WEF)** is an international **non-profit organization** based in **Geneva (Switzerland)** committed to improving state of the world.
- **At recent WEF Annual Meeting 2024**, AIGA released new reports on advanced AI focusing on generative AI governance. **Key highlights** are below,
 - Challenges:** Absence of a **standardized perspective** on the generative AI model lifecycle, vague definitions etc. are **impacting development of safe generative AI**.
 - AI Governance:** Global landscape for AI governance is **complex and rapidly evolving**, **AIGA recommended for**,
 - ◆ **International coordination:** A **multistakeholder approach** involving government, civil society, academia, industry for legitimate governance of AI.
 - ◆ **Compatible standards:** To **avoid significant differences** in standards, **national bodies should work together** and align their efforts.
 - ◆ **Flexible regulatory mechanisms:** To **match AI's rapid advancements**, **investment** in innovation and governance frameworks must be **agile and adaptable**.
 - ◆ **Role of Global South:** Include Global South at all AI stages for innovation, ensuring everyone benefits and minimizing global harms.

Different Approaches for AI governance:

Risk based: Focuses on classifying and prioritizing risks in relation to the potential harm of AI.

Rules-based: Lays out detailed and specific rules.

Principles-based: Sets out fundamental principles or guidelines for AI systems.

Outcomes-based: Focuses on achieving measurable AI-related outcomes without defining specific processes that must be followed for compliance.

- The report investigates **persistence of informal employment** and challenges in breaking free from informal employment.
 - Informal Employment is defined as all **remunerative work that is not registered, regulated or protected** by existing legal framework, as well as **non-remunerative work undertaken in income-producing enterprises**.

➤ Observations of report:

Extent: Informal workers make up **nearly 60% of the workforce globally**, and 90% in low-income countries.

Vulnerability inheritance: Vulnerability of informal workers is **passed on to their children** in the absence of adequate education, skills and social protection policy. **Double burden:** Larger share of workers in developing and emerging economies carry the **double burden of informality and low-paying work**.

➤ India-specific observations:

Low-wage informalization: Strong **segmentation of labour market** with high persistence of both formal wage employment and **low-income informal wage employment**.

Social segmentation: Strong gender- and caste-based segmentation wherein women, lower caste workers, workers with less formal education and rural workers are less likely to formalize.

➤ Policy recommendations:

Alleviate double burden: Through remuneration policies that address inequality, effective minimum wages and improve bargaining power of low-paid informal workers.

Increase formalization: Ensuring adequate coverage by labour laws, social security and tax regulations.

Informal Employment in India

- Over 90% of the entire workforce is informal.
- Over 96% of workers aged 65 and older are in informal employment.
- Since 2011-12, there has been an increase in share of unorganized sector workers.

India's steps for increasing formalization:

- E-Shram portal
- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhanPM
- SVANidhi

Ministry of Education issues Guidelines for Registration and Regulation of Coaching Center 2024

➤ These guidelines were forwarded to the states/UTs for consideration, recognizing that **education falls under the Concurrent List** and coaching institutes are in the jurisdiction & regulated by the states/UTs.

➤ Need of Regulation

Due to recent cases of **loss of lives due to fire, suicides cases, etc** as well as due to methodology & charging exorbitant fees from students.

To take action against **misleading ads by Coaching Centres / Institutions Under Consumer Protection Act, 1986.**

To provide **career guidance and psychological counselling** for the mental well-being of the students. Also, **National Education Policy (2020)** focuses on **regular formative assessment** for learning rather than the summative assessment that encourages 'coaching culture'.

➤ Major Guidelines

States/UTs were urged to **Develop Online Registration Portal** for Coaching Centers.

Coaching Centre to be registered within 3 months from date of implementation of guidelines.

No coaching center shall

- ◆ Engage tutors having less qualification than **graduation.**
- ◆ Make **misleading promises or guarantee** of rank or good marks to parents/students for enrolling them in the coaching center.

Coaching center shall have a **website with updated details** of the qualification of tutors, courses/ curriculum, etc.

Future of Growth Report 2024

About Report:

- Published by the **World Economic Forum.**
- Assesses the **quality of economic growth across 107 countries in four dimensions: Innovativeness, Inclusiveness, Sustainability, Resilience.**

➤ Findings:

High-income economies score high on **innovation and inclusion**, while **lower-income economies** on **sustainability.**

◆ **India**, along with **Kenya** scored **high on sustainability.**

⊕ Report highlighted a **significant economic slowdown**, estimated to fall to the lowest rate in three decades by 2030.

⊕ Most countries' economic **growth is neither sustainable nor inclusive.**

- Report called for a **new approach to economic growth** that **balances efficiency with long-term sustainability and equity.**

Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) notifies new point of presence regulations for NPS subscribers

➤ **PFRDA has notified the Point of Presence (PoP) Regulations 2023**, requiring only one registration for the National Pension System (NPS).

⊕ PoPs are the **first points of interaction** of the NPS subscriber with the NPS architecture.

◆ The authorized branches of a PoP, called **Point of Presence Service Providers (POPSPs)**, will act as **collection points.**

Banks and non-banks can now act as PoPs to onboard NPS subscribers, and they will require only a single registration for NPS, instead of multiple registrations earlier.

The **timeline for disposing of applications** has also been **reduced** from 60 days to 30 days.

The simplification is in line with the Union Budget 2023-24 announcement to **review regulations to reduce the cost of compliance and enhance the ease of doing business.**

About National Pension System (NPS):

Introduced by the Central Government in 2004 to help the individuals have income in the form of pension.

Any citizen of India, whether resident or NRI, **can join NPS.** It is **mandatory to all employees** joining services of the **Central Government (except Armed Forces)** and Central Autonomous Bodies on or after 1st January 2004.

PFRDA regulates NPS under the PFRDA Act, 2013.

About PFRDA:

Statutory body established under PFRDA Act, 2013. **Objective is to promote** old age income security by establishing, developing and regulating pension funds **Ministry:** Ministry of Finance

Tea Board India

Tea Board has mandated all tea producers to **limit generation of teawaste not exceeding 0.2%** of production for **quality produce.**

- **Presently**, tea waste is being used for **producing instant tea, bio-fertiliser and caffeine.** Board is in process of allowing tea waste being used **only for production of instant tea.**

About Tea Board India

⊕ **Nature:** **Statutory body** set up under **Tea Act 1953.** ⊕

Ministry: Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

⊕ **Head Office:** Kolkata

⊕ **Functions:** **Financial and technical** assistance for cultivation, manufacture and marketing of tea, **export promotion** etc.



Panama Canal

- ▶ Panama Canal has been hit by a severe drought forcing authorities to **slash ship crossings by 36%**.
- ▶ Panama Canal is one of the two most **strategic artificial waterways** in the world (other being Suez Canal).
 - ⊕ It connects the **Atlantic (Caribbean Sea) and Pacific Oceans** and links North America with South America.
 - ⊕ It is one of the world's **most important trade routes**.
- ▶ Initially, from its **opening in 1914**, the canal was controlled solely by **USA (which built it)** but in 1999, **control was transferred to Panama**.

Willingdon Island

- ▶ The demand has been raised to revive Willingdon Island, which took on a deserted appearance following the relocation of container terminal operations to Vallarpadam (Kerala).
- ▶ **Willingdon Island**
 - It is one of the **largest man-made islands** in the country, **located near Kochi**.
 - The island was created in **1933** and named after the then British Viceroy of India, **Lord Willingdon**.
 - The island was created with **soil trench produced during the deepening of the famous Vembanad Lake** for the construction of the modern Kochi Port.

Nuclear Battery

- ▶ A Chinese start up **claims to develop a nuclear battery** capable of **producing power for 50 years** without charging.
- ▶ **About Nuclear Battery (or Atomic Battery)**

Such batteries use energy from the **decay of a radioactive isotope (Like nickel-63)** to generate electricity.

 - ◆ **Unlike nuclear reactors**, they do not rely upon **nuclear fission** for power generation.
 - **Benefits:** High energy density, longevity, low maintenance, small size etc.
 - **Potential Applications :** Power source for **deep space mission**, defence missions, **animal tracking**, remote or inaccessible areas on Earth etc.

Surya Sen (1894-1934)

- ▶ He was remembered on his **death anniversary**. **Early life:** Popularly known as **Masterda**, was born in the **Chittagong** neighbourhood of **Noapara** (now in **Bangladesh**).
- ▶ **Contributions:** Participated in the **Non-Cooperation Movement**.
 - ⊕ Known for remarking that "**Humanism is a distinctive virtue of a revolutionary**".
 - ⊕ Under his leadership an **armed force** named **Indian Republican Army** was established in 1930.
 - ◆ Joined by **Kalpana Dutt and Pritilata Waddadar** etc.
 - ⊕ He commanded **1930 Chittagong armoury raid**.
- ▶ **Values:** Courage, Selflessness etc.



Stripe Rust (Yellow Rust) of wheat

- ▶ **Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research**, Karnal (Haryana) has appealed to the farmers to remain vigilant against **yellow rust**.
 - ▶ **Stripe Rust of wheat**
 - ⊕ Caused by a **fungal pathogen, *Puccinia striiformis***.
 - ⊕ It appears in the form of **yellow stripes on wheat leaves**.
 - ⊕ **Major States affected:** Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- Treatment:** Spray Propiconazole Fungicides.

Draft Indian Stamp Bill, 2023

- **Ministry of Finance** invites suggestions on **draft Indian Stamp Bill, 2023** from public.

Once enacted, Bill shall **replace Indian Stamp Act, 1899**.

- **Indian Stamp Act, 1899**

Law relating to **tax levied in the form of Stamps on instruments recording transactions**.

- **Under Article 268 of Constitution**, Stamp duties are levied by **Union**, but collected and appropriated by concerned **States**.
- **Stamp duties** on documents specified in **entry 91 of Union list** of the **Seventh Schedule** are levied by the **Union**. **Other Stamp duties** on documents are levied and collected by **States**.

Distress Alert Transmitter (DAT)

- **ISR** has developed a **Second Generation DAT (DAT-SG)**, incorporating advanced satellite communication and navigation capabilities.
- **DAT is an indigenous technological solution (DAT)** for the **fishermen at sea to send emergency messages** from fishing boats.
 - Messages are sent through a communication satellite and received at **INMCC (Indian Mission Control Centre)**.
 - **INMCC** has a web based network management system called "**SAGARMITRA**" which maintain a database of registered **DAT-SGs**.